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**Non-Canonical Readings of the Qur'an: Recognition and Authenticity (The Ḥimṣī Reading) / قراءة غير متواترة: قراءة حمص**

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# Non-Canonical Readings of the Qur'ān: Recognition & Authenticity

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# Non-Canonical Readings of the Qur'an: Recognition and Authenticity (The Ḥimṣī Reading)\*

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## 1. Introduction

The existence of an old Qur'an manuscript that does not conform to any canonical reading will understandably raise several questions about the history of the Qur'an and the canonisation of its readings: What describes the landscape of Qur'anic readings (*qirā'āt*) before canonisation, said to have been initiated by Ibn Mujāhid (d. 324/936) three centuries after Islam's advent?<sup>1</sup> By what criteria did some readings fall within the canon and some without? How and why did non-canonical readings persist?

The British Library's 'oldest Qur'an manuscript', is just such a nonconforming copy of the Qur'an that can inform enquiries into the Qur'anic canon in a few respects.<sup>2</sup> First, as a Qur'an copy that originates quite early (1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century), it provides a direct look at variant readings circulating before canonisation. Upon analysing the manuscript, the major technical finding of this article is that it belongs not to the canonical Damascene tradition – as has been argued – but to that of Ḥimṣ, about 100 miles north, with some later Damascene additions.

Second, though fragmented, the manuscript is sufficiently extensive to permit a detailed analysis of its textual content, verse divisions, and orthographical style in a way that sheds light on this Qur'an's provenance and production. Evidence that several scribes worked on this Qur'an in more than one location, across time, indicates how complex and lengthy the endeavor of copying a Qur'an could be. In this case, the copying process resulted in a hybrid reading that arguably is notable for the extent to which its hybridity apparently went unnoticed or unchallenged. Its modest profile may have been the natural result of the small scale of differences between readings, or it may reflect a deliberate hybrid that raised no eyebrows because it did not offend the gatekeepers of the canon.

Finally, the manuscript's early provenance can provide insight into the early history of Qur'anic transmission and the formation of the canon of Qur'anic readings. When evaluated against works on the *qirā'āt* tradition and its systemetisers, the manuscript contains clues for a clearer view of the pre-canonical landscape of readings, and

indeed of the nature of the canon itself. In particular, the manuscript presents two intriguing features: it follows a tradition that appears to be non-canonical, yet authentic; and its variants are minute, yet sufficient to serve as diagnostics for identifying the reading tradition it follows. As I attempt to demonstrate below, the dividing line between canonicity and authenticity fell around the contours of authentic transmission and recognition. The early scholars of readings set forth criteria for delineating the authentic from the inauthentic, a main component of which involved placing a high premium on a reading's origin and transmission (*isnād*). Thus, a reading could be authentic, but nevertheless non-canonical if it had a proper *isnād* but lacked some other criterion for canonicity, including popular recognition of the authenticity of its *isnād*. In addition, the variations in readings were so trifling that they might appear to be of no moment except to highbrow grammarians who enjoyed quibbling over minutiae. Yet, the variants were important because they implicated much larger questions of authenticity and canonicity. Early Qur'an scholars sought to identify and authenticate even the minutest variant out of concern for a devotional economy of certainty. They were faithful to the notion that the Qur'an was of divine origin. As Islam's central text for matters of devotion and law, it bound the community of Muslims and connected them to prophetic revelation. For such a text, uninterrupted certainty, in their view, was required. This could be accomplished through assessing the transmission of each variant and its relative weight of authority in the community of Qur'an scholars and at large. Their attempts to do so found expression in the canonisation of certain Qur'anic readings.<sup>3</sup>

An analysis of the manuscript and a review of the canonical and non-canonical collections of readings before and after Ibn Mujāhid together with a look at the criteria for authenticity upon which he relied can help elucidate the nature of *qirā'āt* canonisation. It can also suggest reasons why certain readings, like the one before us, fell outside of the canon, and thereby fill in the backdrop for assessing where to place the Ḥimṣī reading in the overall history of the Qur'anic text.

Before discussing each of these areas, it must be emphasised that I am not the first to examine this old Qur'an in detail. It was edited by François Déroche and Sergio Nosedá, and Yasin Dutton has analysed the manuscript as well.<sup>4</sup> Dutton concluded that the manuscript's text aligns with Ibn ʿĀmir's (d. 118/736) Damascene reading, tentatively observed that the verse-endings bear resemblance to – though they are not identical with – known patterns from Ḥimṣ, and commented that the placement of symbols after every tenth verse does not appear to accord with any known system. He also concluded that the manuscript likely originated in the 1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> century (perhaps between 30/650–1 and 85/704) and that a single scribe produced its skeletal text.

Upon a second look, and with the help of sources for non-canonical readings in general and the Ḥimṣī reading in particular, these observations should be modified. First, this Qur'an copy can be designated as definitively Ḥimṣī in both its 'skeletal

text' (the Qur'anic text absent diacritical marks) and verse-endings. In addition, certain features of the text support an early dating, but other features – including the placement of the tenth-verse symbols – suggest the later addition of symbols according to the Damascene tradition by not one but several scribes or readers.

Before detailing the unique features of this manuscript through a close examination of its text, the next section briefly outlines the readings literature and sources for the Ḥimṣī reading to show how each can be used as diagnostic tools. After section 2, readers interested in a general sketch of the *qirā'āt* tradition and the place the Ḥimṣī reading occupies within its canon should skip section 3, which is highly technical, and move directly to section 4.

## 2. Readings Literature

There is evidence in the 'text of the Qur'an itself as well as in *ḥadīth* [that] indicates that the Prophet compiled a written scripture for Islam during his own life-time', which he edited and completed before his death.<sup>5</sup> There is also evidence that some of Muḥammad's contemporaries and successors compiled their own collections, which did not always reflect the prophetic one in its final form.<sup>6</sup> Apparently, disputes erupted over the correct version until ʿUthmān ordered the collection of an official recension around 30/650–1.<sup>7</sup> He reportedly distributed copies to the major cities of the early empire, and ordered all other codices destroyed.<sup>8</sup> However, reading variants continued to proliferate. Some carried over from the non-ʿUthmānic codices, but more commonly, the variants were based on the ʿUthmānic recension alone, the study of which forms the bulk of the *qirā'āt* literature. This suits our purposes, because a comparison of our manuscript to records of early codices reveal that ours – like all other extant copies of the Qur'an of which we are currently aware – definitively hails from the ʿUthmānic recension.<sup>9</sup> The *qirā'āt* literature describes two main features of ʿUthmānic variants that distinguish one reading from another: (a) differences in orthography or pronunciation, and (b) differences in verse divisions that result in varied verse counts for each sura.

### *a) Orthography and Pronunciation*

The recitation of the skeletal text varies by reader. The variations are small and infrequent enough that they do not change the meaning or flow of the text, but regular and systematic enough that they can serve as diagnostic tools for identifying which reading a particular manuscript follows. An example of a 'major' variant is as follows: most readings record Q. 7:75 as containing the word *qāla*, the Syrian reading alone adds a *wāw* to give *wa-qāla*.<sup>10</sup> A manuscript that displays this and other Syrian variants can thus be matched to the Syrian tradition. The works on canonical readings record 38 such major orthographical variations.<sup>11</sup>

'Minor' variants include differences in diacritics (letter-points and vowels), spelling (involving *hamazāt* and long vowels), and pronunciation (e.g. elongation of certain vowels and assimilation of certain consonants). Where diacritics indicate how a certain word is pronounced (e.g. two dots beneath a letter form to make a *yā'* rather than two dots above to make a *tā'*), a Qur'an copy may match known variants in pronunciation amongst the different readers. However, diacritics are only a marginally useful diagnostic for early copies of the Qur'an, because copyists reportedly omitted letter-pointing and vowelling from Qur'ans even when they included them elsewhere.<sup>12</sup> Likewise, differences in spelling are of limited diagnostic use because spelling conventions were not standardised until the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century or later.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, the *qirā'āt* literature does not systematically categorise spelling according to reader or region,<sup>14</sup> nor does spelling dictate how a reading is pronounced.<sup>15</sup> These two oddities make it impossible to use spelling as a gauge for identifying readings in the written Qur'an.

#### *b) Differences in Verse-divisions*

The placement of verse divisions is the second major diagnostic tool for assessing variant readings. The *qirā'āt* literature records the places that each reader considered the end of an aya (*ru'ūs al-āy* or *fawāṣil*) along with the total number of ayas that each reader counted for each sura.<sup>16</sup> There are disputed verse-endings in almost every sura and corresponding differences over the total verse count for many suras. Compared to a much smaller number of major orthographical variants, the large amount of variants in this area makes them a better gauge for assessing the variant reading tradition of this manuscript.

#### Orthography and the Ḥimṣī Reading

There is no readily available list of Ḥimṣī orthographical variants. The canonical collections describe differences amongst readers from major geographical locations, but the only Syrian to make Ibn Mujāhid and his successors' lists is Ibn 'Āmir from Damascus. To find evidence of the Ḥimṣī reading, we must look elsewhere. Unfortunately, non-canonical variants are 'scattered all over Arabic literature and infrequently turn up in the most unexpected quarters. An absolutely complete collection of them, therefore, would involve the superhuman task of combing through the whole range of Arabic literature.'<sup>17</sup>

Fortunately though, several exegetical works and readings compilations methodically preserve non-canonical readings, making them useful sources for the content of the Ḥimṣī reading. Perhaps most telling among the works of exegesis are those that preceded Ibn Mujāhid's work. One of the most useful registers of early non-canonical readings is al-Ṭabarī's (d. 310/923) *Tafsīr jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl al-Qur'ān*. Also useful are the *ma'ānī al-Qur'ān* commentaries by the grammarians al-Farrā' (d. 207/822), al-Akhfash (d. 210/825–6), al-Zajjāj (d. 311/923) and al-

Nahḥās (d. 338/950); the *i<sup>°</sup>rāb al-Qur<sup>°</sup>ān* works by some of the same authors (namely, al-Nahḥās and al-Zajjāj); and similar works such as Abū <sup>°</sup>Ubayda's (d. 210/825–6) *Majāz al-Qur<sup>°</sup>ān* and Ibn Qutayba's (d. 276/889) *Ta'wīl mushkil al-Qur<sup>°</sup>ān*.<sup>18</sup> Some post-Ibn Mujāhid commentaries continue to list non-canonical readings as well, such as al-Zamakhsharī's (d. 538/1144) *Tafsīr al-kashshāf* and Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalusī's (d. 745/1344) *al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ*.<sup>19</sup> In addition, there are several *qirā'āt* compilations both before and after Ibn Mujāhid that go beyond his list, as detailed below. Finally, two important compilations of non-canonical readings that have survived are Ibn Khālawayhi's (d. 370/980) *Qirā'āt al-shādhidha* and Ibn Jinnī's (d. 392/1002) *Muḥtasib*.<sup>20</sup>

### Verse Divisions and the Ḥimṣī Reading

The canonical registers for verse divisions are more helpful for offering clues about the Ḥimṣī reading, but not enough to allow us to determine its precise contours. Al-Dānī, for example, lists some of the Ḥimṣī variants in his *Bayān*, but his list is not comprehensive. A more extensive account of the Ḥimṣī system of verse divisions is found in an unpublished work by Abū'l-<sup>°</sup>Alā<sup>°</sup> al-Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad al-<sup>°</sup>Atṭār al-Hamadhānī (d. 569/1173–4): *Mubhij al-asrār fī ma<sup>°</sup>rīfat ikhtilāf al-<sup>°</sup>adad wa'l-akhmās wa'l-<sup>°</sup>a<sup>°</sup>shār <sup>°</sup>alā nihāyat al-ījāz wa'l ikhtiṣār*.<sup>21</sup> Housed at the Vatican, this manuscript was listed by Anton Spitaler in summary form along with a note that the few references to Ḥimṣī readings he had come across suggested that there 'seems to exist another at least partially independent and aberrant transmission'.<sup>22</sup>

The *Mubhij* is a work on the differences between ten prominent readers, and as we will see, indeed presents the Ḥimṣī reading as a fully independent transmission. It comprises five chapters and two appendices, which recount the history of revelation, the value of knowing the verse counts, and lists of scholars of the variant traditions along with the variations they followed. The final chapter contains the information on the placement of verse-endings according to ten readers. Al-<sup>°</sup>Atṭār's presentation and treatment of the verse-endings parallel works by al-Dānī and Ibn al-Jazarī (d. 833/1439) in all but one important respect: the ten readers whom al-<sup>°</sup>Atṭār covers do not match the canonical lists.<sup>23</sup> Not only does he include the most-cited reader of Ḥimṣ – Abū Ḥaywa (d. 203/818–9) – but there is evidence to suggest that he centres his data on Abū Ḥaywa and the Ḥimṣī reading. When introducing the ten readers, al-<sup>°</sup>Atṭār singles out Abū Ḥaywa to adduce a lengthy list of his impressive credentials and pedigree of his chain of transmission.<sup>24</sup> In addition, as discussed below, al-<sup>°</sup>Atṭār presents the Syrian reading as the default – unlike other scholars who default to the Kufan reading. Finally, while other sources certainly mention the Ḥimṣī reading, al-<sup>°</sup>Atṭār provides the most comprehensive and detailed account of that reading and of its 'founder', Abū Ḥaywa.<sup>25</sup> By providing details on Abū Ḥaywa and his reading, al-<sup>°</sup>Atṭār adds to the spectrum of non-canonical references, which better allows us to evaluate our Qur'an copy against both canonical and non-canonical sources.

### 3. Analysis of MS Or. 2165

#### Overview

I begin by analysing the variants in orthography and verse divisions and then offer a stylistic analysis of the text. To avoid overlap with Dutton's very lucid study, only a brief summary of variants is presented, and otherwise the reader is referred to his identification of readings. I focus instead on areas that he does not cover and/or to which the sources for non-canonical readings contribute new information. For example, in the orthographical analysis, I identify two major variants in the manuscript that neither Dutton nor the canonical works treat, and discuss some of the minor orthographical variants as well. In the verse-count analysis, I concentrate on the symbols that mark divisions between individual ayas and groups of ayas – again presenting only a summary where Dutton has already analysed this material in detail. The stylistic analysis at the end aims at uncovering information on the making of the manuscript.

#### Orthographical Analysis

##### *a) Major Consonantal Variants*

Seven of the 38 major canonical orthographical variants fall within the published portions of the manuscript, and at least two in unpublished portions. Notably, the manuscript contains an additional two major variants that have no canonical referent. The variants are as follows:

- 1) The uniquely Syrian omission of *wāw* from *[wa-]mā kunnā li-nahtadiya* at Q. 7:43 (f. 1a.3).<sup>26</sup>
- 2) The uniquely Syrian inclusion of *wāw* to yield *wa-qāla* at Q. 7:75 (f. 2a.22).<sup>27</sup>
- 3) The uniquely Syrian omission of a *nūn* from *anjaynākum* to yield *anjākum* at Q. 7:141 (f. 4b.10).<sup>28</sup>
- 4) The Syrian, Medinan and Basran transposition of the *sīn/shīn* and *yāʾ/nūn* in *yusayyirukum* to yield *yunshirukum* (or *yanshurukum*) at Q. 10:22 (f. 15b.2).<sup>29</sup>
- 5) The Syrian and Hījāzī use of the dual instead of feminine pronoun suffix in *khayran minhā* to yield *khayran minhumā* at Q. 18:36 (f. 44b.22).<sup>30</sup>
- 6) The Syrian and others' (all except Meccan Ibn Kathīr) reading of *mā makkannī fīhi rabbī* at Q. 18:95 (f. 47a.20); Ibn Kathīr reads this as *makkananī*, with two *nūns*.<sup>31</sup>
- 7) The Syrian and others' (all except the Meccans) reading of *a-wa-lam yara'lladhīna kafarū* at Q. 21:30 (f. 55b.13); the Meccans read this without the interposed *wāw*.<sup>32</sup>



Dutton has identified an additional two of these major orthographical variants from portions of the manuscript that are not included in the facsimile.

8) The Syrian (Ibn °Āmir) and Medinan use of *fā'* instead of *wāw* in *wa-tawakkal* to give *fa-tawakkal* at Q. 26:217 (f. 77a.7).<sup>33</sup>

9) The Syrian (Ibn °Āmir), Medinan and Kufan addition of a masculine pronoun direct-object suffix in *wa-fihā mā tashtahī'l-anfus* at Q. 43:71 rather than the other readers' *tashtahī'l-anfus*.<sup>34</sup>

The two non-canonical variants are:

10) The manuscript drops the *nūn* and doubles the *zā'* in *li-nanzura* to yield *li-naẓzura* at Q. 10:14 (f. 15a.10). This has been attributed to the Syrian reader Ibn °Āmir and his successor, Yaḥyā ibn al-Ḥārith (d. 145/762).<sup>35</sup>

11) The addition of a definite article in *li-nabī* at Q. 8:67 (f. 9b.3) to yield *li'l-nabī*. This has been attributed to Abū Ḥaywa and Abū'l-Dardā' (d. 32/652), both of whom were Syrian readers.<sup>36</sup>

The manuscript aligns with a Syrian reading in all eleven cases,<sup>37</sup> and five are unique to Syria alone. These observations are enough to unequivocally match the manuscript to a Syrian reading, but probably are not enough to reveal precisely *where* in Syria. Dutton equates the Syrian reading with that of Ibn °Āmir in Damascus, as he was the 'Imām of Shām' in the late 1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> and early 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>38</sup> But such shorthand here would be premature. One reason for this is that the sources present a terminological ambiguity, in that 'Shām' may refer to Damascus, Greater Syria or even Ḥimṣ. Related to this terminological problem is an issue of timing. *Qirā'āt* scholars writing about canonical readers often interchange geographical location with leading readers such that Syria is used interchangeably with Ibn °Āmir, Mecca with Ibn Kathīr, Medina with Nāfi', and so on. All of these leading readers died in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century, whereas our manuscript could be as early as the first.<sup>39</sup> This practice of interchanging city for leading reader occurs in the works on non-canonical readings as well. Abū Ḥaywa, for instance, in the *Mubhij*, is used interchangeably with the Ḥimṣī reading, though he died in 203 AH and follows several generations of Ḥimṣī readers. Hence, labelling this manuscript's Syrian reading as either that of Ibn °Āmir or Abū Ḥaywa would be anachronistic; in this analysis, references to the readings of those two figures must be taken to represent earlier Damascene or Ḥimṣī readings, respectively.

Finally, the non-canonical variants identified above suggest an additional, compelling reason for not attributing our manuscript to Ibn °Āmir too quickly. Both variants clearly indicate that the manuscript may have originated in *either* Damascus *or* Ḥimṣ, and one belongs to either a Ḥimṣī reader or to Ibn °Āmir's Damascene teacher and predecessor but *not* to Ibn °Āmir. At the very least, the non-canonical

variants suggest that our manuscript's reading was known in Syria – or perhaps to Yemeni readers with connections to Syria – and continued in Ḥimṣ even if it was dropped in Damascus.<sup>40</sup> At most, these variants provide the strongest evidence in the orthographical data that we may not locate our manuscript in Damascus after all. As we will see (below in the 'Verse Count Analysis' section), the variants in verse-endings support this conclusion and furthermore, show that the manuscript in fact originates in Ḥimṣ.

### *b) Diacritical Variants*

Dutton has identified and accounted for 22 letter-pointing variants that occur in the manuscript, and concludes that they support the attribution to Ibn ʿĀmir.<sup>41</sup> But again, other variants for which Dutton does not account complicate the simple attribution of this codex to a Damascene reading.<sup>42</sup> For instance, the manuscript sometimes changes the verbal pronoun twice in a way that maintains verb agreement and indicates a deliberate variant:

1) In Q. 22:5 (f. 18b.15–16), two passive verbs that begin with the third person singular *yāʾ* are made into active verbs that begin with the first person plural *nūn*, i.e. *yutawaffā* is rendered *natawaffā* and *yuradd* is rendered *narudd*. This does not match any known variant.

2) Two instances occur at Q. 7:190–1 (f. 7a.14) in which the initial letter is a second person *tāʾ* rather than a third person *yāʾ* as in the standard. The first variant renders the standard *yushrikūn* as *tushrikūn* and the second renders *a-yushrikūn* as *a-tushrikūn*. The only variant recorded for this is that of the Kufan reader al-Sulamī.<sup>43</sup>

While Kufan influence cannot be ruled out absolutely at this stage, strong indications that this manuscript represents a Syrian reading – specifically Ḥimṣī – point to the possibility that these changes represent unattested variants in the Ḥimṣī reading.

### *c) Minor Spelling Variants*

There are several instances of minor spelling variants, but it is difficult to draw firm conclusions from them. In addition to the tenuous connection between readings and spelling noted above, spelling variants do not lead us to a particular reading because they typically involve weak letters – such as long vowels and *hamazāt* – the writing of which does not dictate pronunciation. Here, for example, there are several instances in which weak letters have been dropped,<sup>44</sup> added,<sup>45</sup> and used for alternate spellings.<sup>46</sup> Because of the disconnect between spelling, pronunciation and reader, none are definitively attributable to Ibn ʿĀmir, Abū Ḥaywā, or any other reader.

### Verse-count Analysis

In addition to marking single-verse divisions, scribes who produced this manuscript inserted sura headings to indicate the title of the sura along with the sura's total verse

count, and they placed special, colored symbols after every tenth aya ('rosettes'), every hundredth aya (which appears as a *hā'* above the place of a one-verse symbol, typically taking the place of a rubbed-out rosette) and after every seventh of the entire Qur'an. In this section, I consider these divisions by first listing the total verse count provided in the sura headings; then comparing that count to the actual number of ayas in each sura, which I calculate by examining the individual verse-endings; and finally, examining and comparing the divisions after every tenth aya, hundredth aya and seventh of the Qur'an.

1. *Sūrat al-Aʿrāf* = Q. 7:42–206<sup>47</sup>

The sura heading is missing from the manuscript. The single disputed verse-division that falls within the fragment (at Q. 7:137 (*ʿalā banī Isrāʾīl*)) accords with Kufa, Basra and Syria. With two exceptions, the rosettes appear regularly at ten-verse intervals from Q. 7:51 until the end of the sura and are consistently one aya later than the Kufan system and in step with the Damascene system. The exceptions are the 100-verse symbols that replace the rosettes at Q. 7:101 and Q. 7:201, also one verse later than the Kufan system. The placement of the rosettes and 100-verse symbols suggest Basran and Syrian counts.<sup>48</sup>

After verse Q. 7:167 (MS Q. 7:170) is a mark that reads '*al-subʿ al-thānī khams miʿa wa-sabʿīn wa-[arbaʿ ...]*' (the second seventh: 574).<sup>49</sup> While most canonical sources record 576 ayas in this seventh of the Qur'an (based on a standard Kufan count), al-ʿAṭṭār notes that the second seventh contains only 574 ayas, ending at Q. 7:170.<sup>50</sup> Indeed, Kufan Q. 7:167 turns out to be Syrian Q. 7:170 and, because Syrians drop two verse-endings between the second and third sevenths (the second starting at Q. 4:56), there are only 574 ayas between them – as the manuscript says. Al-ʿAṭṭār's note is telling: that he presents the Syrian reading as the default, unlike other scholars who default to the Kufan reading, offers further evidence (alongside his lengthy recitation of Abū Ḥaywa's credentials) that al-ʿAṭṭār's work centred on the Ḥimṣī reading.

2. *Sūrat al-Anfāl* = Q. 8:1–75<sup>51</sup>

This sura heading notes that the sura contains 77 ayas, which matches the Syrian system only. As for the three disputed ayas, the manuscript matches the Basran and Syrian readings at Q. 8:36, all but the Kufan reading at Q. 8:42, and all but the Basran reading at Q. 8:64. The actual verse count yields only 76 ayas (one short of the amount promised in the sura heading) when the individual verse-endings are counted. But the verse count comes up one short only because a modification has been made: the verse symbol after Q. 8:1 (*in kuntum muʿminīn*) has been rubbed out and the *alif* of the next aya moved over to replace it. Clearly, this was done by a different (later?) scribe because a close examination reveals that the original writing had enough space for a single-verse mark; there is a large darkened spot surrounding

the *alif*; the *alif* stem does not lean to the right as it does elsewhere; and it is considerably thinner and written in a different type of dark brown ink that has not become broken and faded like the ink in the rest of the manuscript. It is unclear who was responsible for the modification at Q. 8:1: it does not follow the Syrian system, as omitting a verse-ending after Q. 8:1 makes the sura fall one aya short of the 77 ayas mentioned in the sura heading. Nor does it follow the Kufan total verse count of 75. It does match the Hījāzī and Basran count of 76, but nothing else in the text or symbols point to these readings. In sum, these clues again point to what may be an unattested Syrian reading and/or a later collation by a scribe following a non-Syrian reading; it also indicates that multiple scribes worked on the manuscript.

### 3. *Sūrat al-Tawba* = 9:1–95<sup>52</sup>

According to the sura heading, there are 130 ayas, matching every system *except* that of Kufa. Although the sura cuts off at Q. 9:95, if we assume that the verse divisions continue incrementally from that point (as there are no disputed verse-endings after Q. 9:70), the sura would end at Q. 9:130, which is consistent with the sura heading's stated verse count. This sura contains no *basmala*, a feature unique to it. There are four disputed verse-endings – three of which al-Dānī records, and a fourth that al-ʿAṭṭār and al-Mutawallī record as unique to the Hīmṣī reading: Q. 9:36. The manuscript matches the two disputed verse-endings that follow both Damascene and Hīmṣī readings (amongst others, at Q. 9:3 and Q. 9:70) and it follows the uniquely Hīmṣī reading at Q. 9:36. In the one instance where the Damascene reading is unique (adding a verse-ending in Q. 9:39 (after *alīman*)), the manuscript is blurred. However, there is no indication of an additional verse-ending there: reading one would place the total verse count at 131 ayas, which does not agree with *any* variant system. Together, these observations further support the notion that the manuscript follows a Hīmṣī, and *not* a Damascene, reading.

### 4. *Sūrat Yūnus* = Q. 10:9–109<sup>53</sup>

The sura heading is cut off and the sources list only three disputed verse-endings in two ayas. In one aya, Q. 10:22, the manuscript accords with a reading shared by Hīmṣīs and others (placing the verse-ending at *min al-shākirīn*) and diverges from the uniquely Damascene reading (placing an ending at *lahu'l-dīn*). The other disputed verse-ending (no verse-ending after *fi'l-ṣudūr* in Q. 10:57) is shared by Damascus and Hīmṣ. In addition, the manuscript lacks a mark for a verse-ending at Q. 10:96 (*lā yu'minūn*), but the omission is probably mistaken, as not counting this aya places the total verse count at 108, which does not accord with *any* system.

The symbols here present several peculiarities. An inexplicable and irregularly drawn rosette appears at Q. 10:15, but rosettes skip Q. 10:10 and Q. 10:20. Thereafter, rosettes align regularly with the Kufan (also Damascene) ten-verse intervals from Q. 10:30 on. At Q. 10:101, a 100-verse marker (red *hāʾ*) appears over

the final rosette, as it did at Q. 7:100 and Q. 7:200, but with the addition of the word 'mi'a' immediately before the *hā'*. As Dutton points out, there also seems to be one final rosette at Q. 10:110, although it is somewhat unclear due to water damage. This would indicate the Syrian total verse count of 110, but leave the oddities at Q. 10:96 and misplaced rosettes unaccounted for. The missing sura heading offers no clues, and all we glean from the oddly placed symbols is further evidence that the scribes who inserted the symbols did not count individual ayas, but probably placed marks according to a separate text. Together, the verse-endings and rosettes suggest a Syrian provenance that aligns more closely to the Ḥimṣī reading than the Damascene one.

#### 5. *Sūrat Hūd* = Q. 11:1–123<sup>54</sup>

This sura heading records 122 ayas, which accords with the Damascene and early Medinan systems, but which, according to al-°Aṭṭār, diverges from the Ḥimṣī total verse count of 123.<sup>55</sup> Only 121 verses are marked by single-verse symbols, but the fact that 121 accords with no system and the disputed verse divisions (or omissions) are all accounted for otherwise, suggests that there are two erroneously omitted verse-symbols. When corrected for those two, the total verse count is 123, matching the Ḥimṣī system. There are seven disputed verse-endings, and according to al-°Aṭṭār, three are Ḥimṣī and counter-Damascene:

- i) Q. 11:54 (*mimmā tushrikūn*). The manuscript counts a verse-ending here, which accords with the Ḥimṣī and Kufan systems only.<sup>56</sup>
- ii) Q. 11:74 (*fi qawmi Lūṭ*). The manuscript omits a verse-ending here, which matches the Ḥimṣī and Basran systems.<sup>57</sup>
- iii) Q. 11:86 (*in kuntum mu'minīn*). The manuscript counts a verse-ending here, which matches the Ḥimṣī and Ḥijāzī systems.<sup>58</sup>

The uniquely Ḥimṣī matches in individual verse counts offer further evidence that this Qur'an copy follows the Ḥimṣī reading. Moreover, the net effect of the Ḥimṣī individual verse counts is to add one aya to the Damascene total of 122 (by omitting a count where the Damascenes count it and by including two where Damascenes do not) for a Ḥimṣī total verse count of 123. This divergence may signal that the systems usually, but not always, share total verse counts, and here is an example of a difference.

#### 6. *Sūrat Yūsuf* = Q. 12:1–111<sup>59</sup>

The total verse count contained in the sura heading is 111 according to all the readers, and there are no disputed ayas recorded in the sources. No deviations occur within the manuscript.

7. *Sūrat al-Raʿd* = *Q. 13:1–43*<sup>60</sup>

The sura heading is illegible, but Syrians agree that the total verse count is 47 ayas. Of the six disputed ayas, al-ʿAṭṭār records one that is unique to Ḥimṣ, which al-Dānī does not record: *Q. 13:17* (placing a verse-ending after *waʿl-bāṭil*), and the manuscript matches the Ḥimṣī reading. At *Q. 13:16* (*waʿl-baṣīr*), only Damascenes count an aya, and the manuscript does not. Again, this points to a Ḥimṣī and non-Damascene internal verse division. By contrast, the ten-verse rosettes line up to Damascene multiples of ten, again suggesting that a Damascene scribe placed the rosettes through collation.

8. *Sūrat Ibrāhīm* = *Q. 14:1–52*<sup>61</sup>

The sura heading lists 55 ayas, which accords with the Damascene reading and diverges from the Ḥimṣī one (which al-ʿAṭṭār and al-Mutawallī list as 54).<sup>62</sup> Of the seven disputed verse-endings, al-ʿAṭṭār tells us that there is a Ḥimṣī and non-Damascene omission at *Q. 14:19* (*bi-khalqin jadīd*), which the manuscript follows. He also tells us that there is a shared Damascene and Ḥimṣī verse count at *Q. 14:42* (*ʿammā yaʿmaluʿl-ẓālimūn*), which also matches the manuscript.<sup>63</sup> The manuscript diverges from non-Syrian variants in all other cases. Here again, the ten-verse rosettes align to the Damascene reading, and the omission at *Q. 14:19* places the total verse count at the Ḥimṣī count of 54 – bolstering the evidence that the text is Ḥimṣī while the sura heading and other symbols are Damascene.

Another seventh marker appears at *Q. 14:22* (MS *Q. 14:25*), which reads *ʿal-subʿ al-thālith sitt miʿa wa-sabʿ ...* (the third seventh: 6[0]7).<sup>64</sup> Again, sources on the Kufan reading place the sevenths at *Q. 14:22* and al-ʿAṭṭār gives the placement of this seventh at *Q. 14:25*.<sup>65</sup> Again, the manuscript aligns with al-ʿAṭṭār's undoubtedly Syrian reference.

9. *Sūrat al-Ḥijr* = *Q. 15:1–99*<sup>66</sup>

The sura heading lists 99 ayas, which matches all the reading traditions. The verse-endings are similarly undisputed. The only deviation in the manuscript comes at *Q. 15:97* (*bi-mā yaqūlūn*), which is missing a verse symbol. Because it corresponds with no tradition, and because indeed, there is no dispute over the verse-endings, this seems to be another scribal error.

10. *Sūrat al-Naḥl* = *Q. 16:1–128*<sup>67</sup>

The sources agree that this sura has 128 ayas, and the sura heading reflects that. There are no disputed verse-endings.

11. *Sūrat al-Isrāʾ* = *Q. 17:1–111*<sup>68</sup>

The sura heading is partially obscured, making the total verse count impossible to read. The sources record only one disputed verse-ending, where the Kufans place a

verse-ending at Q. 17:107 (*li'l-adhqāni sujġadan*), which does not match the manuscript. The manuscript contains an additional three variants that are unattested and that again point either to an unknown modifier, as at Q. 8:1, or a careless scribe. They are as follows: There is a verse-ending after Q. 17:2 (*li-banī Isrā'īl*); four words later in the same verse (*wakīlan*), there is a smudge that suggests someone has erased and perhaps shifted a verse symbol where it normally appears; and there is a distinct smudge after Q. 17:90, which indicates erasure. After Q. 17:90, the ten verse rosettes – which had been regularly placed as expected – move one aya forward, suggesting again that a ten-verse rosette marker collated rather than counted individual ayas when placing rosettes, or if he did count individually, there is a missing symbol after Q. 17:89, which has run off the page.<sup>69</sup> This sura does not yield any information relevant to attributing the reading tradition followed here.

12. *Sūrat al-Kahf* = Q. 18:1–110<sup>70</sup>

The sura heading notes 106 ayas, which accords with the Syrian system.<sup>71</sup> For each of the eleven disputed verse-endings, the manuscript follows the Syrian reading (shared between Damascus and Ḥimṣ).<sup>72</sup> There also appears to be a verse-ending in the middle of Q. 18:18 (at *bi'l-waṣīd*), which is not counted by any tradition, and the second rosette appears one aya too early, while the next rosette appears where expected. This means that the verse-ending at Q. 18:18 was either a scribal error, the placement of which should be ignored (as a collating rosette marker has done), or it is an unattested verse-ending.

13. *Sūrat Maryam* = Q. 19:1–98<sup>73</sup>

The sura heading notes 98 verses, which matches the Syrian, Basran and early Medinan systems,<sup>74</sup> and notes also that there is a *sajda* within the sura.<sup>75</sup> Of the three disputed verse-endings, there are no uniquely Syrian divisions, but the manuscript diverges from the uniquely Kufan and Ḥijāzī variants. It contains one anomaly: a missing verse symbol after Q. 19:70 (*ṣiliyyan*).<sup>76</sup> This appears to be a scribal error for three reasons: (1) considering the missing symbol to be a deliberate omission places the 70-verse rosette at Q. 7:69 – one aya too early for the shared Syrian system; (2) a deliberate omission places the total verse count at 97, which does not accord with any system; and (3) this omission does not match any reading.

14. *Sūrat Ṭā-hā* = Q. 20:1–135<sup>77</sup>

This sura has the most disputed ayas, the most instances of uniquely Ḥimṣī variants attested in the *Mubhij* and other sources, and the most anomalies in the manuscript that do not match any attested reading. The sura heading notes that there are 140 ayas (not 104 as appears in the facsimile), which matches the Damascene system only, according to al-ʿAṭṭār.<sup>78</sup> The internal verse division follows the Ḥimṣī system – corresponding to the three places unique to the Ḥimṣī reading as well as the three

places where the Ḥimṣī and Damascene readers agree, but diverging from the two places where the Damascene reading is unique.

Three unattested verse-endings that the manuscript matches are as follows:

- i) Q. 20:25 (*lī ṣadrī*) (f. 51a, 12): There is a missing verse symbol, accompanied by a properly-placed ten-verse rosette at Q. 20:32 (Syrian Q. 20:30).
- ii) Q. 20:40 (*min al-ghamm*) (f. 51a, 24): There is an additional verse symbol, which has been placed inside a ten-verse rosette (Syrian Q. 20:40).
- iii) Q. 20:124 (*ʿan dhikrī*) (f. 54a, 13). There is an additional verse symbol followed by a properly placed ten-verse rosette at Q. 20:126 (Syrian Q. 20:130).

The rosettes generally fall where a Damascene collator would place them. The inexplicable deviations in individual verse-endings notwithstanding, the matches to attested verse divisions and the rosette placement add to the evidence that the manuscript's text is Ḥimṣī and its other symbols Damascene.

#### 15. *Sūrat al-Anbiyāʾ* = Q. 21:1–112<sup>79</sup>

The sura heading lists 111 ayas, which matches all but the Kufan reading. The manuscript matches the non-Kufan verse count. There is only one disputed aya – at Q. 21:66 (*wa-lā yaḍurrukum*), which is counted by the Kufans but, as in the manuscript, omitted by Syrians, Basrans and Ḥijāzīs.

#### 16. *Sūrat al-Ḥajj* = Q. 22:1–72<sup>80</sup>

The sura heading notes 74 ayas (not 78 as appears in the facsimile transcription and which is the total Kufan verse count), which matches the Syrian system only.<sup>81</sup> There are five disputed verse-endings, one of which is unique to Syria: Q. 22:42. The manuscript accords with this isolated Syrian variant and more generally, follows the shared Syrian counts with one exception: the manuscript is missing a symbol at Q. 22:45 (*mashīd*). This omission seems to be another scribal error as it does not match any recorded variant.

#### Stylistic Analysis: Orthography and Symbols<sup>82</sup>

The final component of the manuscript analysis concerns the style of the script and textual layout, which can help date the text and provide information about its production – how many scribes were involved, where they were located, and what readings they are most likely to have followed.

##### *a) Scripts and Dating*

A number of the manuscript's features reflect a 'Ḥijāzī' script – an early script thought to have originated in the Ḥijāz. To help identify and date early Qur'anic scripts like the type used in this manuscript, scholars have grouped them on the basis



of several key letter shapes by which the Ḥijāzī script may be identified: a sloping *alif*, with or without a foot-serif; a medial *‘ayn/ghayn* with a boxy, constrained shape; a final *mīm* with a short tail; a final *nūn* (or *sīn/shīn*, *ṣād/dād*) with a semi-circular curved tail that resembles an elongated *rāʾ*; a distinctive medial *hāʾ*, and a relatively thick pen stroke;<sup>83</sup> there are distinctive forms for *dāl/dhāl* and *ṭāʾ/ẓāʾ* and a reverted *yāʾ* (in which the tail curves around to the right and extends several letters backward) that appear in early dated Arabic papyri;<sup>84</sup> and in overall appearance, words are ‘freely divided between lines’, there are ‘uneven side margins, particularly on the left’, and no line rulings.<sup>85</sup> The manuscript matches these descriptions in every respect; its script is unmistakably Ḥijāzī.

A Ḥijāzī script designation allows us to date the manuscript to the early period, perhaps as early as the 1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>86</sup> Ḥijāzī script was used in the 1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> century in all kinds of written works – from Qur’ans on vellum to letters and administrative records on papyri.<sup>87</sup> After the 1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> century, that script declined as Arabic writing developed into other forms, but it did not disappear altogether and could have been used particularly for Qur’anic texts in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>88</sup> This manuscript is no doubt early, and based on its features that match other dated first-century texts in a comparative review, it may well date back to the 1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> century, and definitely goes back to the early 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> at least.

#### *b) Symbols: Scribes and their Geographical Affiliations*

Symbols for the single verse-endings are either a pair of three vertical dashes or a circle of dashes.<sup>89</sup> Interestingly, the first type switches rather abruptly to the second type at f. 3b and ends just as abruptly at f. 8a; this change accompanies a change in handwriting, by which we can identify *two* scribes.<sup>90</sup> The alignment of handwriting style with verse symbol type indicates that the scribe who wrote the skeletal text also placed the single-verse symbols.

Likewise, two rosette types indicate two different scribes. The usual rosette is a large red circle surrounded by an outer circle of varying numbers of dots.<sup>91</sup> A second type adds an inner circle of varying numbers of dots (appearing from ff. 9b–15a).<sup>92</sup> The two rosette types and evidence of later additions suggest at least two rosette markers different from the two scribes who penned the skeletal text. The rosette placements seem to follow a Damascene rather than Ḥimṣī system, the oddly placed rosettes seem to be either mistaken or reflective of an unattested reading drawn from a second text.

The 100-verse *hāʾ*, which appears in the manuscript eight times, is typically marked by the letter *hāʾ* over a single verse count.<sup>93</sup> Modifications to rosettes or single-verse symbols at the *hāʾ*’s insertion points suggest that the 100-verse marker was the same as neither the single-verse marker nor the rosette marker.<sup>94</sup> Throughout the text, the *hāʾ*’s also appear to have been written differently, implying that at least two different scribes placed them.<sup>95</sup>

Finally, both seventh symbols in the manuscript – at Q. 7:167 (MS Q. 7:170) and at Q. 14:22 (MS Q. 14:25) – are clearly later additions.<sup>96</sup> This indicates that the scribes who wrote the skeletal text did not place the seventh symbols.

Taken together, these features offer four bits of information that help draw conclusions about how many scribes contributed to the making of this copy of the Qur'an and what reading tradition(s) they followed.

- At least two different scribes worked on the skeletal text of this manuscript, rather than only one as Dutton supposes,<sup>97</sup> and the same hand that penned the script penned the single-verse symbols. These scribes who penned the skeletal text and the single-verse symbols must have been Ḥimṣī as the orthographical variants suggest a Ḥimṣī reading and the verse-endings confirm it.
- The scribe who modified the skeletal text at Q. 8:1 came after the scribes who initially penned it, but how long after and from what geographical location is unknown.
- The scribe who penned the sura headings was Damascene. In the few places where Damascenes and Ḥimṣīs disagree on a sura's total verse count, the headings in the manuscript match the Damascene reading. There is nothing in the style of the sura headings to suggest that more than one scribe wrote them. The only oddity is that the scribe did not finish the job (they are largely missing from the unpublished portions of the manuscript). The sura headings were no doubt penned *after* the skeletal text was written, indicating that the manuscript traveled to Damascus after it originated in Ḥimṣ.
- At least two scribes placed the ten-verse rosettes, two placed 100-verse symbols different from the rosette markers, and at least one placed the seventh symbol – inserted after the skeletal text was penned. All of these scribes followed a Syrian reading, which is generally Damascene. It is not clear whether there was overlap between the scribes who placed the rosettes or 100-verse symbols and those who placed the sura-headings, seventh symbols, or modifications to the skeletal text. Assuming overlap requires a minimum of four scribes who inserted additional marks, and assuming no overlap leaves a minimum of seven.

Adding the number of possible later scribes (four to seven) to the two original Ḥimṣī scribes means that anywhere from six to nine scribes, at minimum, contributed to the making of this manuscript. As the analysis of the orthography and verse divisions show, the original scribes certainly followed the Ḥimṣī reading tradition, while the other symbols were placed by scribes according to the Damascene system.

The foregoing analysis offers internal evidence that the pre-canonical landscape of readings was neither uniform nor insular. Not only did readers travel between cities and readings, but manuscripts did as well. On this basis, we can conclude that our

manuscript (or the one from which ours was copied) is an example of a non-canonical reading that was later subjected to revisions or additions from a canonical reading. Two major questions remain about the existence of such Qur'ans and the persistence (or lack thereof) of non-canonical reading traditions like that of Ḥimṣ: what was the status of the Ḥimṣī tradition before canonisation of the *qirā'āt*, and how did canonisation affect it? One might expect that canonisation would have stymied the use of non-canonical readings from an earlier period, and that the non-canonical Ḥimṣī reading would have disappeared. Yet, as al-ʿAṭṭār and others show, sources for the Ḥimṣī reading remain.

#### 4. Placing the Ḥimṣī Reading in Context

##### Canonisation: Criteria and Consensus

After ʿUthmān's compilation and before the formation of a *qirā'āt* canon, readings proliferated, but not with 'untrammelled freedom'.<sup>98</sup> Canonisation was a process, consisting of gradual articulations of more and more consensus-criteria for the acceptability of a reading. With ʿUthmān's compilation came the beginnings of the first of four criteria for valid Qur'anic readings: conformity with the orthography of his codex. According to al-Ṭabarī, ʿUthmān standardised the written text and ordered all divergent copies destroyed in attempts to preserve not only the integrity of the text, but also the integrity of the early community.<sup>99</sup> He reports that Muslim troops from various regions converged on a battlefield in Armenia and accused each other of unbelief when they heard differences in each others' Qur'anic recitation; this motivated ʿUthmān's standardisation.<sup>100</sup>

The spread of ʿUthmān's standardised codex did not obliterate all differences, as the persistence of regional variants shows. But it did reduce the differences, early scholars argued, to the minor inflections within the subset of seven readings (*aḥruf*) reportedly sanctioned by the Prophet. In discussing variant readings, Qur'an scholars typically flag the ḥadīth in which ʿUmar heard the companion Hishām ibn Ḥakīm reciting the Qur'an differently from how ʿUmar had heard it from the Prophet, at which point he dragged Hishām before the Prophet in complaint. The Prophet instructed Hishām to recite, and then affirmed, 'this is how it was revealed'. The Prophet then instructed ʿUmar to recite, and likewise affirmed, 'this is how it was revealed', adding that 'the Qur'an was revealed according to seven *aḥruf*', all of them acceptable.<sup>101</sup> This ḥadīth, in multiple versions, reflects the '*aḥruf* doctrine', through which Qur'an scholars explain the acceptability of diverse readings. There is, for example, Abū ʿUbayd (d. 224/839), a luminary of Qur'an readings whose work, *Kitāb al-qirā'āt*, is said to be one the earliest collections.<sup>102</sup> In his book *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, he precedes a discussion of the *qirā'āt* with a presentation of the *aḥruf* doctrine, and subsequent scholars follow suit.<sup>103</sup> These scholars differed over whether ʿUthmān's codex encompassed the full range of the seven *aḥruf*, some

contending that it did not, others insisting that it did.<sup>104</sup> Regardless, they all agreed in principle that the °Uthmānic codex fell squarely within the bounds of the *ahruf* doctrine. The unstated corollary – as articulated later – was that the authenticity of readings rested on the ground that they were compiled and transmitted through knowledgeable and trustworthy readers.

The importance of trustworthy transmissions of Qur'an readings was implicit in the practices of some of the early scholars even before discussions of the *ahruf* doctrine. In the 1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> centuries, leading readers and their students set about recording individual readings.<sup>105</sup> Their notebooks reflected syntheses of the variants they learned from multiple readers, according to methodologies that each had devised for preferring one variant over another. For example, Nāfi° (d. 169/785) is said to have learned from 70 Successors, and announced that he adopted only the variants upon which two or more of them agreed.<sup>106</sup> Al-Kisā°ī learned from Ḥamza (d. 156/772), but, adopting another method for variant-preference, differed from his teacher in 300 places where he preferred the readings of other scholars.<sup>107</sup> Thus, pre-canonical readings were often hybrids or amalgams drawn from two or more transmissions.

These early writings on *qirā°āt* developed with increased contacts between readers and with state patronage, and the genre of *qirā°āt* literature blossomed.<sup>108</sup> Books of individualised readings gave way to collections of multiple readings, which sometimes detailed differences between just two readers but often recorded as many readings as each author-reader had encountered or studied. Ibn al-Nadīm (d. late 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century) provides a list of works collecting readings whose authors go as far back as the Kufan reader Abān ibn Taghlib (d. 141/758).<sup>109</sup> Other lists include works by Hārūn ibn Mūsā (d. ca 170/786 or before 200/816) and Ya°qūb al-Ḥaḍramī (d. 205/820).<sup>110</sup> There is evidence that Muḥammad ibn °Umar al-Wāqidi (d. 207/822) composed such a work, transmitted by Muḥammad ibn Sa°d (d. 230/845).<sup>111</sup> And of course we have Abū °Ubayd's collection in his *Faḍā°il* as well as his lost *Kitāb al-qirā°āt*, which, by Ibn al-Jazarī's count, listed 25 readings.<sup>112</sup> There is also the well-known reader al-Dūrī (d. 246/860), who is said to have read and recorded works according to multiple readings; Aḥmad ibn Jubayr ibn Muḥammad al-Kūfī (d. 258/872), who is said to have written a book on five readers; Qāḍī Ismā°il ibn Ishāq al-Mālikī (d. 282/895), who collected 20 readers in his book (including Ibn Mujāhid's seven); and al-Ṭabarī, who recorded 25 readers in his *Tafsir*.<sup>113</sup> The list goes on, with books ranging from collections of two readings all the way up to 50.<sup>114</sup>

Many of the readers were skilled grammarians, and they contributed significantly to the *qirā°āt* corpus in other veins as well.<sup>115</sup> As mentioned above, grammarians and litterateurs referenced *qirā°āt* variants in works of grammar and phonology, poetry and literature, *ma°ānī al-Qur°ān* and similar exegetical works, as well as *i°rāb al-Qur°ān* and *iḥtiāj* works. For the most part, grammarians paid deference to the

boundaries set by the traditionist readers' *isnād*-orientation. Indeed, if they were to respect the practice of citing earlier precedent for their readings, their 'focus ... was confined to venting rational explication through the veneer of linguistic justification and evaluation'.<sup>116</sup> Even within those bounds, they managed to make notable contributions to the corpus. As mentioned, they provided a useful register for and explanations of *qirā'āt*, along with other sources for non-canonical readings that otherwise may have been lost or obscured over time.<sup>117</sup> Grammarians also provided a look into the genesis of individual readings (*ikhtiyār*), and thereby, a lens into the criteria by which readings were deemed acceptable, and eventually, canonised.<sup>118</sup>

Each grammarian had his own methodology for according a certain reading preference. For al-Akhfash, it was an amalgam of factors, in which grammatical soundness was subordinated to agreement with °Uthmānic orthography.<sup>119</sup> His general concern with readings was to adduce proofs that would strengthen his linguistic method of exegesis, but in citing variants, he carefully rejected readings that diverged from the written formula, particularly where they might be considered grammatically unsound.<sup>120</sup> Here, we see affirmation of the notion that °Uthmānic orthographical agreement was an indispensable criterion for a reading's validity, here with no special weight given to the value of transmission.

Soon after though, Ibn Mujāhid's contemporary, the grammarian al-Naḥḥās, deliberately emphasised the primacy of transmission over grammatical or linguistic soundness. To be sure, he exhibited a philologist's concern for grammatical correctness. With respect to some variants that appear in our manuscript, for example, al-Naḥḥās presents and explains the grammatical soundness of both the Syrian reading (*yanshurukum*) and the majority reading (*yusayyirukum*) in Q. 10:22, but notes his preference for the majority's version because it better accords with the semantic usage of words of the same import in other verses.<sup>121</sup> In contrast, he notes his preference for the Syrian reading (*khayran minhumā*) over the majority reading (*khayran minhā*) in Q. 18:36, arguing that a dual pronoun is more appropriate for referring to two gardens.<sup>122</sup> Even so, he criticised Abū °Ubayd's definitive *Kitāb al-qirā'āt*, upon which he drew heavily, for his methodology of reading preferences. Al-Naḥḥās's objection was that Abū °Ubayd seemed at times to subject the Qur'an to the analogical reasoning of grammatical standards (*maqāyīs*) rather than 'collective transmission'.<sup>123</sup> In this way, the implicit importance of trustworthy transmission was eventually made explicit as tradition-conscious scholars challenged tradition-flouting grammarians; and Ibn Mujāhid loomed large in that endeavour.<sup>124</sup>

Like al-Naḥḥās, Ibn Mujāhid was a traditionist-minded scholar who took issue with the extent to which grammarians-cum-readers diverged from the authentically transmitted readings in favor of grammatical correctness.<sup>125</sup> Writing in late 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century Baghdad, he was concerned that some amateur readers would pass along faulty readings due to mistakes made from their poor grasp of Arabic and superficial

understanding of the text. He was even more concerned about grammarians who knew the grammatical rules full well but ignored the primacy of the transmitted nature of readings. Painting a portrait of these two types of problematic readers, Ibn Mujāhid explains that one type is the person:<sup>126</sup>

who recites what he has heard from [his teacher] with no [other] ability other than to recite what he has learned – without knowledge of sound grammatical constructions (*iʿrāb*) or anything else. It will not be long before such a person who memorises [the Qur'an] (*ḥāfiẓ*) will forget over time. Sound grammatical constructions will be lost due to the extent of resemblance [of one phrase or construction to another] and the abundance of [different vowels] in a single verse, because he has no knowledge base of Arabic grammar (*ʿArabiyya*) nor can he recognise the meanings to which [the grammatical constructions] refer. Rather, he only relies upon his own memory (*ḥifẓ*) and [recollection of] what he heard (*samāʿ*). [Such a] reader may forget, his recollection failing him, the variants (*ḥurūf*) [becoming] confusing him [to the point that] he recites with grammatically unsound constructions (*lahn*), unawares. Meanwhile, the confusion causes him to attribute [the erroneous] reading to someone else, absolving himself [from responsibility or blame]. Conceivably, [such a scenario] could befall [even] a trustworthy person.

For Ibn Mujāhid, the mistake in those cases is an honest one, but one that cautions against mere rote repetition of the Qur'an without attention to the soundness of a reading's grammar and meanings, which may aid accuracy in transmission. He goes on to explain that:<sup>127</sup>

there are others who recite the Qur'an correctly [grammatically], recognise the meanings, and know the dialects (*luḡhāt*), but have no knowledge of readings and the differences between narrators and transmissions [of readings]. It may be that [their] acumen in proper grammatical construction pushes [them] to recite a variant (*ḥarf*) that is valid according to Arabic grammar [but] that no predecessor has recited. [Such people] would thereby become innovator[s] (*mubtadiʿ*) [as to the Qur'ān text].

Here, Ibn Mujāhid dispenses a considerable amount of censure, and he aims to set the record straight. He devotes the rest of his preface to explaining the importance of *qirāʾāt* transmission to the exclusion of theoretical speculation, repeating the maxim that '*qirāʾa* is sunna'. The Prophet instructed his followers to read the Qur'an as he recited it to them, he explains, and the true Qur'an scholars have done just that. In this way, authentic readings have passed from generation to generation.<sup>128</sup> In short,

in light of tradition's emphasis on transmission, intentionally flouting that principle in favor of grammar was, for Ibn Mujāhid, quite unacceptable.

Ibn Mujāhid was joined by other traditionist scholars in efforts to counter tradition-flouting grammarians and other faulty readers. His book of seven readings was designed to identify the most prominent authentic readings in the major cities of the empire. He chose to list the seven most well-known readers from five major cities, along with two well-known students for each reader, and concentrated on listing a detailed chain of transmission for each.<sup>129</sup> In addition, he helped prosecute grammarians who insisted on propounding *isnād*-less readings, which was another way of making public (and enforceable) the traditionist criteria for acceptable readings. The two famous cases are those of Ibn Shannabūdh – who was tried for teaching readings that diverged from the °Uthmānic codex, and Ibn Miqsam – who was tried for promulgating readings that accorded with the °Uthmānic codex but that were not based on transmitted readings.<sup>130</sup> The implication was that conformity with the °Uthmānic codex was a must and after that, *isnād* was paramount. Ibn Mujāhid's attention to Arabic grammar in his preface reflected the third criterion that he subordinated to the boundaries set by the first two.

Ibn Mujāhid was not the first to circumscribe readings according to these three criteria, nor was he the last. Over a century before him, Hārūn ibn Mūsā is said to have been the first to have authored a work that limited the lists of readings to those he could authenticate through tracing the *asānīd* for each. Ya°qūb al-Ḥaḍramī followed suit.<sup>131</sup> And some other pre-Ibn Mujāhid collections were similarly discerning, such as that of Abū °Ubayd Aḥmad ibn Jubayr ibn Muḥammad al-Kūfī, who also limited his collection to the most prominent reader from each of the five major cities.<sup>132</sup> These types of collections continued after Ibn Mujāhid, who, as we will see, did not by any means have the last word on acceptable readings.

#### Canonicity: An Additional Requirement of Widespread Recognition

Notwithstanding the canonical status that Ibn Mujāhid's list of seven readings came to enjoy (as the numerous commentaries on his work by subsequent *qirā'āt* scholars attest), his somewhat arbitrary choice of seven was later criticised, the criteria for authenticity clarified, and the number of canonical readings supplemented accordingly. The criticism centred on the ambiguity created by Ibn Mujāhid's choice of the number seven for his collection, which is the same number featured in the *aḥruf* doctrine. Scholars remarked that Ibn Mujāhid should have picked any number *but* seven for his list in order to lessen the chances that the lay person would conflate his seven readings with the seven of the *aḥruf* doctrine.<sup>133</sup> Doing so also would have minimised the extent to which later scholars who simply *preferred* Ibn Mujāhid's list were able to exploit the confused conflation of *qirā'āt* with *aḥruf* to assert that Ibn Mujāhid's list had the authority of *exclusive* legitimacy.<sup>134</sup>

Addressing this confusion, Ibn al-Jazarī clarified the criteria for authenticity of Qur'anic readings by reiterating the three required elements for authenticity upon which *qirā'āt* scholars had agreed, and by noting a possible fourth. The first three are by now familiar: A reading had to conform to °Uthmānic orthography, reflect proper Arabic grammatical rules, and rely on an authentic chain of transmission. According to Ibn al-Jazarī, 'any reading with [these three elements] is authentic or valid (*qirā'a ṣaḥīḥa*)' and comes 'from the seven *aḥruf*' whether it stems from the seven, ten or otherwise accepted readers (*al-a'imma al-maqbūlīn*) – from his time or afterward. Conversely, if any one of these elements is missing from a reading, it is to be regarded as 'weak (*ḍa'eīfa*), anomalous (*shādhḍha*) or invalid (*bāṭila*)'.<sup>135</sup> Ibn al-Jazarī noted that some scholars also stipulate a fourth element connected to the third: wide-spread transmission (*tawātur*). For reasons laid out below, this fourth element is more properly labelled 'popular recognition', and as it turns out, it proved extremely important to the formation of the canon.<sup>136</sup>

Ibn al-Jazarī's formulation performed two tasks in differentiating between canonical and non-canonical readings. First, it shed light on the sense in which Ibn Mujāhid's project was to be taken. His was not an attempt to create a closed canon or to finalise a grammatically-correct, vowelised redaction of the Qur'an to prevent distortions or grammatically unsound recitations that might accompany Islam's spread to non-Arabic-speaking lands.<sup>137</sup> By the 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century, any such concerns would have been a lost cause. Nor are there indications that he wanted 'to achieve absolute uniformity', or that he needed to 'ameliorate if not bring to an end the rivalry among scholars, each of whom claimed to possess the one correct reading'.<sup>138</sup> On the contrary, the readers' wide subscription to the seven *aḥruf* doctrine in their collections demonstrated a certain comfort with, and accommodation of, a diversity of readings.

Instead, Ibn Mujāhid was one of many who sought to bring order and clarity to what a reader with a traditionist worldview would have seen as untidy additions from speculative grammarians. It should be noted that his and other readers' approaches did not place them outside of the traditionist milieu of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> centuries simply because their main concern went beyond the individual chains of authority of the type found amongst scholars devoted to transmitting ḥadīths for legal purposes.<sup>139</sup> Rather, their objection to grammarians who proliferated variants with little regard for tradition as transmission was behind their appeal to heightened standards for authenticity along with an orientation, in the context of Qur'an transmission, toward the principle of widespread transmission and popular recognition.<sup>140</sup> As such, Ibn Mujāhid's selection centred on authentic readings that were widespread and popularly recognised during his time, and perhaps, accessible to him from Baghdad. He did not claim comprehensiveness or exclusivity, conceding that individuals might validly adopt one of the readings that had not made his list of seven, so long as those readings were supported by a reliable chain of transmission;



yet he did not include them in his list because they lacked widespread recognition during this time.<sup>141</sup>

To be sure, Ibn Mujāhid's collection became authoritative during his own lifetime, given his scholarly acumen, student network, and considerable government-backing. Claims to exclusivity came later, and the canonisation of his named seven readings was incidental and subsequent to his project. His contribution laid in his powerful championing of criteria for authentic readings in the face of tradition-flouting grammarians – criteria which his predecessors had long-since formulated. Read in this light, the criticisms levied against Ibn Mujāhid were not so much about his project as they were about its subsequent reception and treatment amongst some later scholars who viewed it as a comprehensive endeavor to create a closed canon.

Second, Ibn al-Jazarī's later explanation of the criteria for valid readings described how and why several readings beyond Ibn Mujāhid's seven could be considered canonical, and why certain other readings fell outside the canon. As scholars continued to list and authenticate readers after Ibn Mujāhid, just a generation later, they collectively came to recognise an additional three readers who also met the three (or four) criteria for authenticity and thereby assumed canonical status.<sup>142</sup> The additions raise the notion that canonicity really did have a fourth criterion that had a lower threshold of diffusion than 'wide-spread transmission' (*tawātur*), namely widespread or popular recognition (*shuhra*). The reader-authenticating collections subsequent to Ibn Mujāhid, in their recognition of an additional three canonical readers, were succeeded by collections that identified an additional four, who then assumed a quasi-canonical status. They were quasi-canonical because the absence of the *tawātur* label from the 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century era of codification meant that these four could not be unqualifiedly grouped with the other ten; but because they otherwise met the criteria for authenticity, they were afforded virtually the same status as the other ten.<sup>143</sup> Interestingly, and notwithstanding their near-inclusion in the canon proper, the missing feature of *tawātur* technically placed the additional four readings in the category of *shādhah*, the term commonly used to refer to non-canonical readings.

In fact, *shādhah* is a multi-tiered category said to encompass every reading that does not meet the readers' criteria for canonicity.<sup>144</sup> Canonicity is not to be confused with authenticity, given the number of non-canonical readings considered authentic and even quasi-canonical. Apparently, readings in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century and before were only called *shādhah* if they lacked a strong *isnād* that signaled their transmission according to some preceding authority; the connotation of non-canonical – i.e. outside the canonical lists of seven or ten – necessarily arose later.<sup>145</sup> Later, Ibn al-Jazarī observed that if Ibn Mujāhid's seven are *mutawātir* by consensus, the same must be the case for the additional three, who were students of the original seven, extending from the earlier leading readers' downward transmission chains.<sup>146</sup> Still

later, al-Bannā<sup>3</sup> noted that the additional four are *shādhdh* only in that they lack consensus for the *tawātur* label but were nevertheless perfectly acceptable because of the well-known recognition and strength of their *isnāds*.<sup>147</sup> In highlighting the absence of consensus on *tawātur* and stressing the recognition of the strength of the four readings amongst his contemporaries and forebears, al-Bannā<sup>3</sup> lends support to the notion that the fourth criterion for canonicity was not really *tawātur*, but rather recognition of it.

### The Ḥimṣī Reading Again

With this understanding of the non-canonical, how might we place the Ḥimṣī reading to which our manuscript belongs in context? Inasmuch as it falls outside of the canonical lists, the Ḥimṣī reading is, by definition, non-canonical (*shādhdh*). But whether that fact alone makes it inauthentic or invalid depends on how the reading squares with the four criteria for authenticity. As our analysis of this Ḥimṣī text demonstrates, the first element is met: it accords with the °Uthmānic orthography. To determine fully whether the manuscript meets the second element of grammatical soundness requires details on pronunciation that do not show up in the orthographical variants. But its general agreement with the canonical Damascene reading in places where orthography and diacritics do reveal aspects of pronunciation suggest that it does. As for the third element of an authentic *isnād*, there is evidence that the *qirā'āt* scholars considered it authentic, especially through Abū Ḥaywa's chain of transmission.<sup>148</sup> Specifically, per the fourth element, there are even indications that the Ḥimṣī reading enjoyed at least some measure of popular and scholarly recognition.<sup>149</sup> Specifically, in addition to references in the works of some grammarians and compilers of non-canonical collections, references to Abū Ḥaywa and his predecessors in other sources demonstrate that the Ḥimṣī reading was a recognised, independent reading.<sup>150</sup> Abū'l-Barhasam(?), Abū Ḥaywa's teacher and immediate predecessor as the 'Imām of Ḥimṣ' is said to have been one of the most renowned non-canonical readers, and Makkī al-Qaysī (d. 437/1045) mentions Abū Ḥaywa as one of the well-known non-canonical readers.<sup>151</sup> There are also frequent references to Abū Ḥaywa, in the *tafāsīr* of al-Zamakhsharī and Abū Ḥayyān, which were useful in explaining many of the features of this manuscript.<sup>152</sup> And the references persist in other *tafāsīr* as well.<sup>153</sup>

Be that as it may, these references may speak to some recognition of the Ḥimṣī reading and may even be said to point to its authenticity, but they do not reveal whether or for how long the Ḥimṣī tradition advanced in a sound, unbroken chain. It might be interesting to speculate on why the reading fell into relative obscurity in that it never made it into the canonical or quasi-canonical lists. But any definitive assessment of the scope of recognition of the Ḥimṣī reading likely would require a detailed investigation into its post-Ibn Mujāhid transmission and the actual use or recognition of the readings. We can say with certainty though that the Ḥimṣī reading

persisted as an authentic reading sufficiently well-known that it was preserved in readings literature across the centuries. Added to the above list of 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century grammarians and readers, and 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> century exegetes, are, for example, al-ʿAṭṭār's *Mubhiḥ* in the 9<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> century and al-Mutawallī's *Tahqīq* in the last century.

## 5. Conclusion

This analysis of an old Qur'an manuscript in light of canonical as well as non-canonical sources for readings has revealed three features that illuminate other important aspects of the *qirāʾāt* tradition in general. Consider them in reverse order. First, the manuscript's Ḥijāzī script points to an early date, serving as evidence that the manuscript goes back to the 1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> century. This insight serves as just one point of departure for drawing conclusions about the pre-Ibn Mujaḥid *qirāʾāt* landscape – i.e. evaluation of the reading variants and stylistic elements of early Qur'anic manuscripts. Second, the placement, style and in some instances, content of the symbols within the manuscript suggest the contributions of later Damascene scribes – six to nine or more. This piece of information offers some insight into the production of such early manuscripts, and again, about the landscape of Qur'anic readings before Ibn Mujaḥid. Moreover, the presence of multiple readings in one manuscript suggests some fluidity in *qirāʾāt* circles, at least in Syria. Third, the text follows the non-canonical tradition of the Ḥimṣī reading. An initial review of the text points to a reading that aligns with the ʿUthmānic codex and seems close to the Damascene reading, but contains enough divergences from the Damascene or other canonical readings to prompt further investigation.<sup>154</sup> Investigation into the differences reveals features of the Ḥimṣī reading, which in turn give occasion to explore sources for that reading. Sources for Ḥimṣī variants in wording are preserved in works of grammar, literature and *tafsīr*, and al-ʿAṭṭār has preserved a detailed record of Ḥimṣī variants in verse divisions. From these works, we know, for example, that this manuscript follows Ḥimṣī readings and diverges from Damascene ones in several places (e.g. at Q. 9:36; Q. 10:22; Q. 11:54, 74 and 86; Q. 13:17; Q. 14:55; and the total verse count of 123 in *Sūrat Hūd*).

More generally, the clues provided by the manuscript's non-canonical features offers evidence about the early landscape of *qirāʾāt*, serving as physical evidence of the type of readings that existed prior to Ibn Mujaḥid. The persistence of sources on those readings in the *tafsīr* and *qirāʾāt* literature raises questions about the nature of Ibn Mujaḥid's project as applied to that early landscape and for the landscape of *qirāʾāt* after his death. Ibn Mujaḥid no doubt aimed to rein in inauthentic readings, defined as those that lacked appropriate attention to transmission and other criteria for authenticity. That scholars have exhibited uncertainty regarding the reasons for and methods by which he went about this project has resulted in doubt over its effects vis-à-vis canonisation. The strongest explanation of his project as traditionist-

oriented emerges not only from his stated goals (in the introduction to his book) and actions (participation in two trials), but also the presence and persistence of *qirā'āt* like that of Ḥimṣ, which later sources treat as neither canonical nor inauthentic. In other words, Ibn Mujāhid sought not to limit and exclude all but his list of seven readings; he aimed to announce and apply criteria for distinguishing acceptable from truly unacceptable readings, in response to the increase in potentially questionable readings. By applying three (or four) measures of authenticity, he and his intellectual successors placed heavy emphasis on a reading's transmission – in terms of both *isnād*-soundness and popular recognition.

The fourth element of popular recognition is perhaps more significant and more enigmatic than scholars like Ibn al-Jazarī intimate. For example, we know the Ḥimṣī reading met the three explicit criteria for authenticity, but nevertheless fell short of Ibn Mujāhid and subsequent scholars' canonical lists. This must be because it failed to meet fully the criterion of popular recognition, which begs the question: Just what was the nature of that element (or its absence) in this case? Was it the popularity of the *isnād* or the popularity of the reading that helped canonise a text, or were those two sides of the same coin? Perhaps there were problems with the Ḥimṣī chain subsequent to Abū Ḥaywā or perhaps his reading was simply never quite popular enough on the ground. These are lingering questions that go to more fully understanding the formation and continuity of the *qirā'āt* canon.

Overall, this study has illustrated how analysing an early Qur'anic manuscript against the full spectrum of *qirā'āt* literature – canonical and non-canonical – can help better map the history of Qur'anic transmission. This study applies directly to two cities within Syria, and can be repeated with respect to other manuscripts that may hail from other areas. Recent work has uncovered a number of early manuscripts, but there have been few detailed studies of them and it is unclear whether or how the manuscripts match any of the variant reading systems, what geographical identity attaches to those readings, and what status those readings hold within the *qirā'āt* canon.<sup>155</sup> Detailed studies of these manuscripts, when combined with external evidence from related Ḥadīth and *qirā'āt* literature, and taken together, will add solid facts to the corpus of data necessary for better understanding the textual history of the Qur'an, along with the origin and meaning of its variants. Here, I have attempted to examine a nonconforming Qur'an in a way that sheds light on the process of canonisation and the meaning of canonicity for variant readings, for which transmission largely determined their recognition and authenticity.

## NOTES

\* This project began in 2004 as a collaborative effort with Elias Muhanna and Naseem Surhio to situate an old Qur'an manuscript from the British Library, which was made available to Princeton in facsimile form. Certain features of the text raised questions about the manuscript's provenance, and those that did not seem to conform to the canonical systems of

variant readings prompted a search for information on readings that fell outside of the canon. In the midst of this project, Yasin Dutton published his evaluation of the manuscript's technical aspects. His findings largely mirrored our own, making publication of our findings no longer necessary, except that he left open the question of the manuscript's non-canonical aspects. I thus pursued those aspects with an eye toward addressing the historical context of such anomalous readings. In 2005, I participated in the School of Oriental and African Studies' biennial Qur'an conference, entitled 'The Qur'an: Text, Interpretation and Translation', where I had the opportunity to discuss some of my ideas with scholars working in the field. While in London, I also visited the British Library, and was able to view the unpublished portion of the manuscript on microfiche. Soon after, I received a manuscript on the Ḥimṣī reading from the Vatican, which allowed me to supplement the technical data with some final pieces of information necessary to complete this article. I owe many thanks to Michael Cook, who procured the Qur'an manuscript for Princeton's library and first brought it to my attention; he also provided helpful comments on several drafts of this paper. My deep thanks go to Hossein Modarressi, who offered many insightful comments, corrections, and also read through more than one draft. I am also grateful to Mohamed Zakariya for helping me to work through some of the symbols in the text and teaching me about calligraphy; Elias for sharing his technical data for Suras 17–21; Naseem for doing the same for Suras 8 and 11–16 as well as for helping to track down the main source for the Ḥimṣī reading; Mustafa Shah for providing excellent suggestions for improvement; and the following people for reading earlier drafts and/or providing valuable comments on the overall project: Yasin Dutton, Beatrice Gruendler, Behnam Sadeki, and the SOAS conference's organisers and participants. Of course, I am entirely responsible for any errors.

1 There has been some debate about whether 'canon' can be applied in the Islamic context in general and the Qur'anic context in particular. See, e.g., A. Al-Azmeh, 'The Muslim Canon from Late Antiquity to the Era of Modernism' in A. Van Der Kooij and K. Van der Toorn, (eds), *Canonization and Decanonization* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1998), pp. 173–228, esp. pp. 193–205. Azmeh notes that multiple variant Qur'anic readings were reduced to seven in the 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century and 'eventually recognized as canonical on the basis of appeal to consensus by Ibn Mujāhid' (p. 195). But he adds that 'the history of Qur'anic composition is [still] obscure', the canonisation of the readings is 'neither properly charted nor understood', and the 'absence of a proper study of canonization' calls us to 'concentrate on the properly historical and structural matter of canonicity' which is 'related more immediately to the authority maintaining and interpreting the canon, and not the raw canon' (p. 198). For a fuller study of canonisation and canonicity as applied to Islamic texts, with focus on the main Sunnī Ḥadīth collections, see Jonathan Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, forthcoming), esp. ch. 2, pp. 20–46.

2 This is the label that the British Library's catalog gives to MS Or. 2165. The first 61 folios of British Library MS Or. 2165 have been made available through a facsimile copy published by François Déroche and Sergio Noja Nosedá in 2001. François Déroche and Sergio Noja Nosedá (eds), *Sources de la transmission manuscrite du texte coranique. I. Les manuscrits de style ḥiǧāzī, Vol. II, Tome I. Le manuscrit Or. 2165 (f. 1 à 61) de la British Library* (2 Vols. Leda: Fondazione Ferni Noja Nosedá, and London: British Library, 2001). At the British Library, the full manuscript was only available to me briefly on microfiche. I refer to a few features of the additional folios, but mostly exclude them from my analysis. Hence, in this article 'manuscript' or 'MS' refers to the available facsimile portion. In addition, unless otherwise specified, references to variants and verses are to the 'standard' printed edition that first appeared in Egypt in 1924 and which most copies of the Qur'an outside of Africa now follow. The standard editions follow the canonical Kufan reader 'Āṣim's reading of the °Uthmānic codex through his pupil Ḥaḥṣ.

3 For further discussion on the collection and canonisation of the readings see, for instance, Harald Motzki, 'Alternative Accounts of the Qur'an's Formation' in Jane Dammen McAuliffe (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Qur'an* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 59–75; Claude Gilliot, 'Creation of a Fixed Text' in *The Cambridge Companion to the Qur'an*, pp. 41–57.

4 Déroche and Nosedá (eds), *Sources de la transmission manuscrite*; Yasin Dutton, 'Some Notes on the British Library's "Oldest Qur'an Manuscript" (Or. 2165)', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 6:1 (2004), pp. 43–71. See also Adolf Grohmann, 'The Problem of Dating Early Qur'ans', *Der Islam* 33 (1958), pp. 213–31 (passing mention).

5 Hossein Modarressi, 'Early Debates on the Integrity of the Qur'an: A Brief Survey', *Studia Islamica* 77 (1993), pp. 5–39, p. 6 (noting indications that the Prophet deliberately excluded some earlier verses – to which the Qur'an refers as 'abrogated' or 'caused to be forgotten', in Q. 2:106 – from the written redaction); see also Estelle Whelan, 'Forgotten Witness: Evidence for the Early Codification of the Qur'an', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 118:1 (1998), pp. 1–14 (suggesting additional sources of evidence for the earliest Qur'an in inscriptions and epigraphy such as on the Dome of the Rock and at the Prophet's Mosque in Medina, numismatics, and records of Qur'an copying and sales). Standard accounts of official compilations place the first collection of the Qur'an into a single volume in the year 11/632, as a project undertaken by Abū Bakr, who did not publicise or replace the other codices, but kept them with 'Umar's daughter Ḥafṣa. See, e.g., Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl āy al-Qur'an*, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (30 vols, Egypt: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1954–68), vol. 1, p. 26; Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), *al-Itqān fī 'ulūm al-Qur'an*, ed. Sa'īd al-Mandūh (2 vols, Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Kutub al-Thaqāfiyya, 1996), vol. 1, p. 202. Modarressi notes that these standard accounts (the timing of which is disputed in the Ḥadīth sources) arose only in the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century, and identifies the genesis of those reports (Modarressi, 'Early Debates', p. 14).

6 See Ibn Abī Dāwūd al-Sijistānī (d. 316/929), *Kitāb al-maṣāḥif* in Arthur Jeffery (ed.), *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'an* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1937). For a list of the main reported differences between the early codices, see Modarressi, 'Early Debates', pp. 10–13.

7 For accounts describing the disputes and 'Uthmān's compilation, see, e.g., al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi'*, vol. 1, p. 26; M.M. al-Azami, *The History of the Qur'anic Text: From Revelation to Compilation* (Leicester: UK Islamic Academy, 2003), pp. 79–108; W. Montgomery Watt, *[Bell's] Introduction to the Qur'an* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1970); Theodor Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Qorāns, Band III: Die Geschichte des Qorāntexts*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, revised by G. Bergsträsser and Otto Pretzl (3 vols, Leipzig: Diterichsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1926–36), pp. 262–3, p. 266. For works that assess the 'Uthmānic compilation or reconstruct the period preceding it see, in addition to Modarressi, 'Early Debates', pp. 6–22, e.g., Harald Motzki, 'The Collection of the Qur'an: A Reconsideration of Western Views in Light of Recent Methodological Developments', *Der Islam* 78 (2001), pp. 1–34, esp. pp. 2–3.

8 Scholars differ over how many copies 'Uthmān had made and distributed. A common account mentions that the number was four, five, or seven (see al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, vol. 1, p. 167, noting that the popular understanding is five – no doubt referring to the original plus four copies). Most sources say that four copies went to four towns – Basra, Kufa, Syria (Shām) and Medina. The version that says there were seven copies adds Yemen and Bahrain to the foregoing cities, and the two versions recording five or seven as the number say that 'Uthmān made four or six copies and kept the original (*al-imām*) for himself. See, e.g., Abū 'Amr al-Dānī (d. 444/1053), *Kitāb al-muqni' fī rasm maṣāḥif al-amṣār*, ed. Otto Pretzl (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, and Istanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1932), p. 9. In his investigation into two versions of the story (four towns or six), Michael Cook concludes, on the basis of external historical evidence as well as internal textual evidence, that Qur'anic variants reflect genuine

transmissions from an archetype that must have been distributed to four, not six, cities. M. Cook, 'The Stemma of the Regional Codices of the Koran', *Graeco-Arabica* (2004), pp. 89–104.

9 For a sample of works referencing other early Qur'ans, see below, n. 155.

10 See below, n. 27, and accompanying discussion.

11 See Aḥmad ibn Mūsā ibn Mujāhid, *Kitāb al-sabʿa fiʾl-qirāʾāt* (n.p.: n.d., 1972); al-Dānī, *Muqniʿ*; Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, pp. 11–14. Listing these as well as some non-canonical variants are Aḥmad Mukhtār ʿUmar and ʿAbd al-ʿĀl Sālīm Makram, *Muʿjam al-qirāʾāt al-Qurʾāniyya* (5 vols, Kuwait: al-Tābiʿa li-Munazzamat al-Ḥajj waʾl-Awqāf waʾl-Shuʿūn al-Khayriyya, 1991).

12 For instance, Abū ʿUbayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām (d. 224/838) lists reports condemning the practice of placing diacriticals in the Qurʾan in his *Faḍāʾil al-Qurʾān* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1991), p. 239; Ibn al-Jazarī, *al-Nashr fiʾl-qirāʾāt al-ʿashr*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Ḍabbāʾ (2 vols, Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Tijāriyya al-Kubrā, n.d.), vol. 1, p. 14, notes that the early Qurʾans had no letter-pointing (*nuqaṭ*) or vowels (*shakl*); and Grohmann notes that sparse diacritical dots appear on the oldest dated papyrus-document (dated 22/643), on an inscription from 58/678, and on coins minted in 82/701–88/707, but that the appearance of diacritics remained sparse in the 1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> century because of 'their rejection in certain circles of intellectual people'. Grohmann, *From the World of Arabic Papyri* (Cairo: al-Maaref Press, 1952), pp. 82–3.

13 See Beatrice Gruendler, *The Development of the Arabic Scripts: From the Nabatean Era to the First Islamic Century According to Dated Texts* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1993); Beatrice Gruendler, art. 'Arabic Script' in Jane Dammen McAuliffe (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān* (5 vols, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2003), vol. 1, pp. 135–44.

14 This is not to say that no such connection can be made. Some of the *qirāʾāt* literature describes different modes of pronunciation that may have resulted in different spellings, and other sources on the development of the Arabic script describe spelling conventions by region. For example, Ibn Qutayba does so in his *Taʾwīl mushkil al-Qurʾān*, ed. al-Sayyid Aḥmad Ṣaqr, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Cairo: Dār al-Turāth, 1973) as does Ibn Jinnī in his *Muḥtasib* (see below, n. 20); both list regional differences in pronunciation of *spoken* dialects that influenced local readings of the Qurʾan. Similarly Sībawayhi's (d. 177/793) *Kitāb* and Mubarrad's (285/898) *Muqtaḍab* contain phonological definitions. See Sībawayhi, *Kitāb*, ed. Muḥammad Kāẓim al-Bakkāʿ (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla; and Amman: Dār al-Bashīr, 2004) (and for a useful organisation of the Qurʾanic variants contained therein, see Adrian Brockett, 'Qurʾān Readings in *Kitāb Sībawayh*', *School of Abbasid Studies* 2 (1988), pp. 129–206); Mubarrad, *Muqtaḍab*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥamad (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1999). Using such sources, one could perhaps categorise the conventions of spelling and pronunciation by region and then match them up to the regional styles of reading to determine whether there is any connection between the two.

15 For example, in our manuscript, there is an additional final *yāʾ* in *tastahyi* at Q. 7:127 (f. 4a.6) to render *tastahyi*, as well as in *yuhyi* at Q. 7:158 (f. 5b.13) and at Q. 10:56 (f. 17a.7) to render *yuhyi*. This additional *yāʾ* reflects a spelling convention whereby a final *yāʾ* is added when preceded by a *kasra* as in these instances (al-Dānī, *Muqniʿ*, p. 30). But the addition or omission of a *yāʾ* in such places does not determine how the reading is pronounced. Readers seem to differ little over whether the final vowel of these two words is vocalised as a long *yāʾ*: it is, whether written or not. Accordingly, a small 'diacritical' *yāʾ* follows the word in the printed Qurʾan, in which the text has been printed without the written *yāʾ* to signal that it is pronounced nevertheless. This 'diacritical' *yāʾ* also appears in printings of the Warsh and Qālūn readings from Nāfiʿ and the Iraqī readings of al-Dūrī from al-Kisāʾī and Abū ʿAmr. See, e.g., the Moroccan printing of Warsh's reading, *al-Qurʾān al-karīm bi-rivāyat Warsh*

(Morocco: King of Morocco, 1996); the Libyan printing of Qālūn's reading (Libya: Government of Libya, 2004); and the compact disc with the Iraqi readings, *Min al-qirā'āt al-sab': mabādī' wa-qawā'id al-tajwīd* (Damascus: Dār al-Ma'rifa, 1999), discs 2–3.

16 The first three books we have on the subject are: Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Qāsim Ibn al-Anbārī (d. 328/940), *Kitāb idāh al-waqf wa'l-ibtidā' fī kitāb Allāh*, ed. Muḥyi'l-Dīn Ramaḍān (Damascus: al-Maṭba'a al-Ta'āwuniyya, 1971); Abū Ja'far Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Naḥḥās, *Kitāb al-qaf' wa'l-i'tināf*, ed. Aḥmad Khaṭṭāb al-ʿUmar (Baghdad: al-Jumhūriyya al-ʿIrāqīyya, Wizārat al-Awqāf, 1979); al-Dānī, *al-Muktafā fī'l-waqf wa'l-ibtidā'*, ed. Jāyid Zaydān Mukhlif (Baghdad: Iḥyā al-Turāth al-Islāmī, 1983). Al-Dānī explains that his list is a compilation of information from the exegetes, the books of readers and grammarians, and ḥadīths that inform where the Prophet and readers paused in reading (*al-Muktafā*, pp. 100–1), and his work is said to be a comprehensive compilation of the earlier works, for which it became the main source of information on verse-endings (see the editor's introduction to *al-Muktafā*, p. 50). Al-Dānī's *al-Bayān fī 'add āy al-Qur'ān*, ed. Ghānim Qaddūrī al-Ḥamad (Cairo: Maktabat al-Kulliyāt al-Azhariyya, n.d.) includes information from *al-Muktafā*, omitting its explanatory comments, listing the verse-endings (*fawāṣil*) rather than all the places of pauses in reading, and adding information as to the total verse count by reader.

17 Arthur Jeffery, Foreword to Ḥusayn ibn Aḥmad ibn Khālawayhi, *al-Qirā'āt al-shādhda or Mukhtaṣar fī shawādhidh al-Qur'ān min kitāb al-baḍī'*, ed. G. Bergsträsser (Cairo: Raḥmāniyya, German Orientalist Foundation, 1934), p. 5. For lists of sources in which non-canonical readings are found, see p. 5 (listing *tafāsīr* by al-Zamakhsharī, Abū Ḥayyān and al-Shawkānī in addition to early works devoted to non-canonical readings); G. Bergsträsser, 'Nichtkanonische Koranlesarten im Muḥtasab des ibn Ginnī' in *Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften Philosophisch-historische Abteilung* 2 (1933), pp. 5–77, p. 33 (listing grammatical and philological works); Ḥusayn ʿAṭwān, *al-Qirā'āt al-Qur'āniyya fī bilād al-Shām* (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1982), pp. 64–80 (adding biographical dictionaries (for readers, belles lettres and ḥadīth narrators), regional histories and caliphal biographies, books by individual readers, exegetical works generally – including *ma'ānī al-Qur'ān* and *i'rāb al-Qur'ān* works, and Ibn Manẓūr's (d. 711/1311–12) lexicon); Mustafa Shah, 'The Early Arabic Grammarians' Contributions to the Collection and Authentication of Qur'anic Readings: The Prelude to Ibn Mujaḥid's *Kitāb al-Sab'a*', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 6:1 (2004), pp. 72–102, esp. pp. 88–93 (listing the works of early readers and grammarians, including *qirā'āt*-specific works, commentaries, grammatical works and *ḥujja* works offering grammatical justifications of variant readings); Omar Hamdan, 'Können die verschollenen Korantexte der Frühzeit durch nichtkanonische Lesarten rekonstruiert werden?' in Stefan Wild (ed.), *The Qur'an as Text* (Leiden: E.J. Brill: 1996), pp. 26–40 (describing the fragmented manuscripts of the *qirā'āt* encyclopedia by Abū Ja'far al-Ṭabarī (his *al-Jāmi' fī'l-qirā'āt*), al-Hudhalī (d. 465/1072–3) and Abū Ma'shar al-Ṭabarī (d. 478/1085–6)). See also the works cited in the third section of the first chapter of Ibn al-Nadīm's (d. 385/995 or 388/998) *Fihrist*.

18 Abū ʿUbayda's *Majāz* is one of the earliest preserved works in this area, and several scholars writing *tafāsīr* and *ma'ānī* works are said to have relied on it, e.g. Ibn Qutayba in his *Mushkil* and *Gharīb*; al-Ṭabarī in his *Tafsīr*; al-Zajjāj in his *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*; Abū Bakr al-Sijistānī (d. 330/941–2) in his *Tafsīr gharīb al-Qur'ān*; al-Naḥḥās in his *Ma'ānī*; al-Azhārī (d. 370/980–1) in his *Tahdhīb al-lughā*; Abū ʿAlī al-Fārisī (d. 377/987) in his *ḥujja* works. See Fuat Sezgin's introduction to Abū ʿUbayda, *Majāz al-Qur'ān*, ed. Muḥammad Fu'ād Sezgin, 1<sup>st</sup> edn (Egypt: Muḥammad Sāmī Amīn al-Khānjī, 1954), p. 17.

19 Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalusī, *Tafsīr al-baḥr al-muḥīṭ*, ed. ʿĀdil Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Mawjūd and ʿAlī Muḥammad Mu'awwaḍ (8 vols, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1993); Maḥmūd ibn ʿUmar al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf ʿan ḥaqā'iq ghawāmiḍ al-tanzīl wa-ʿuyūn al-aqāwīl fī wujūh al-ta'wīl* (4 vols, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿArabī, n.d.). For instance, there is record of a



Ḥimṣī orthographical difference at Q. 8:57 (see al-Andalusī, *al-Baḥr*, vol. 4, p. 518; al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, vol. 2, p. 134) and record of a vowel difference at Q. 9:28 (see al-Andalusī, *al-Baḥr*, vol. 5, p. 28; al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, vol. 2, p. 183). Non-canonical readings appear in other *tafsīr* works as well – in the later period and right up to the present day, as in Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's (d. 606/1209) *Tafsīr*, al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī's (d. 1091/1680) *Tafsīr*, and Muḥammad al-Shawkānī's (d. 1255/1834) *Fath al-qadīr*, to name a few. However, these works tend to refer to the canonical variants (with the exception of al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī, who refers to the readings of °Alī (see *Tafsīr al-Ṣāfi*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (4 vols, Beirut: Mu'assasat al-A°lā li'l-Maṭbū'āt, 1982), e.g. vol. 2, p. 227 (for Q. 7:127)), but these do not figure into our text), and add nothing new to al-Zamakhsharī and Abū Ḥayyān's more extensive references. For example, in a random spot check of the diagnostic points of orthographical difference in our manuscript, al-Shawkānī generally refers to readers only by region (e.g. 'Syrians' or 'Iraqis') and when he does refer to a reader by name, it is typically to a canonical reader (e.g. 'Ibn °Amīr' or 'Abū °Amr'). See, e.g., al-Shawkānī, *Fath al-qadīr*, ed. °Abd al-Raḥmān °Umayra (6 vols, al-Manṣūra: Dār al-Wafā° li'l-Ṭibā°a wa'l-Nashr wa'l-Tawzi°, 1994), vol. 2, p. 213 (for Q. 7:43); vol. 2, p. 451 (for Q. 10:22); vol. 3, p. 291 (for Q. 18:36).

20 Ibn Jinnī, *Muḥtasib* [or *Muḥtasab*] *fī tabyīn wujūh shawādh al-qirā°āt wa'l-idāh °anhā*, ed. Muḥammad °Abd al-Qādir °Aṭā (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-°Ilmiyya, 1998). Of the few works that mention this particular work in their entries for Ibn Jinnī (there is no mention in, e.g. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, ed. Yūsuf °Alī Ṭawīl (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-°Ilmiyya, 1996), p. 138; al-Khaṭīb, *Ta°rikh Baghdād*, vol. 11, p. 311), there is often no vowel to indicate whether the first word is active or passive (e.g. Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī, *al-A°lām* (8 vols, Beirut: Dār al-°Ilm li-Malāyīn, 1979), vol. 4, p. 364). An exception is in Shams al-Dīn Abī °Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn °Uthmān al-Dhahabī's (d. 748/1348) *Siyar a°lam al-nubalā°*, ed. Shu°ayb al-Arna°ūt and Muḥammad Na°im al-°Arqasūsī (25 vols, Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risāla, 1981–), vol. 17, p. 17–19, where the editors have voweled it *Muḥtasab*. In transliteration, scholars have used both spellings, e.g. H. Modarressi, *Tradition and Survival: A Bibliographical Survey of Early Shi'ite Literature* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2003), p. 418 (*al-Muḥtasib*); C. Melchert, review of Ibn Mujāhid, *Ḥijājāt Abī al-Faḥr ibn Jinnī fī'l-Muḥtasib*, ed. Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ al-Ḥandūd (Buraydah 1988), in *Al-°Usur al-Wusta: The Bulletin of Middle East Medievalists* 14:2 (2002), p. 37; G. Bergsträsser, 'Nichtkanonische Koranlesarten im *Muḥtasab* des ibn Jinnī' in *Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften Philosophisch-historische Abteilung* 2 (1933), pp. 5–77, p. 33. If the title is *Muḥtasib*, this accords with what can be read as the claim of the book's title that the book 'investigates' the arguments in favor of the non-canonical readings. If it is *Muḥtasab*, this works well with Ibn Jinnī's attempt in the book to express his belief that each of the readings were 'deemed' valid (liturgically) in God's view. I have chosen to use the former.

21 Vatican MS 1456 (composed in 843/1439–40, according to the colophon (f. 34b), which is not long after Ibn al-Jazarī was teaching and writing in the same area). So the title appears in this manuscript; in Anton Spitaler, *Die Verszählung des Koran* (München: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaft, 1935), p. 6 (citing Otto Pretzl, 'Die Wissenschaft der Koranlesung', *Islamica* VI (1934), p. 241); and in Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur* (5 vols, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), Supplement I, p. 724. It has been pointed out to me that this title may be corrupted, as *baḥja* has little to do with *sirr*, and as there is no other known manuscript with that combination in its title. See, e.g., *al-Fihris al-Shāmil* (3 vols, Amman: al-Mu°assasa, 1987), vol. 1 (listing only one entry for 'mubḥij': *al-Mubḥij fī'l-qirā°āt al-thamān* by Sibṭ al-Khayyāt °Abd Allāh ibn °Alī ibn Aḥmad (d. 541/1146–7)). Carl Brockelmann lists only one other copy of this text in Berlin (*Geschichte*, Supplement I, p. 724), but that manuscript has moved to a private collection and is unavailable.

22 Spitaler, *Die Verszählung*, p. 46. Aside from the *Mubhij*, Spitaler references another four sources that contain information about the Ḥimṣī reading, but notes that none of them are complete. Spitaler, *Die Verszählung*, pp. 4–9, pp. 21–2. Those sources are, in addition to al-Dānī's *Bayān*, Ibrāhīm ibn °Umar al-Ja°barī (d. 732/1333), *Rawḍat al-ṭarā'if fī rasm al-maṣāḥif* (rather than *Rawḍat al-ṭarīf fī'l-rasm* as in Spitaler); Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn °Abd Allāh al-Ḍarīr al-Mutawallī, *Tahqīq al-bayān fī °add āy al-Qur°ān* (rather than °*adad* as in Spitaler); and Muḥammad ibn °Alī ibn Khalaf al-Ḥusaynī al-Ḥaddād (d. 1357/1939), *Sa°adat al-dārayn fī bayān (wa-°add) āy mu°jiz al-thaqalayn*. Dānī's work is of course available; the last work has been published, but was unavailable to me; the only manuscript available to me was al-Mutawallī's *Tahqīq* (Princeton MS C0723.205) (incomplete, but covering the sections contained in our copy of the Qur'an). It is interesting that al-Mutawallī – a prominent Egyptian Azharī Qur'an scholar – transmits the Ḥimṣī reading until so late (he died in 1895) and that our manuscript of his work seems to have been copied by a Syrian scribe (see the colophon, naming the scribe as Muḥammad al-Shāmī al-Qahāwī). On al-Mutawallī, see al-Ziriklī, *al-A°lām*, vol. 6, pp. 246–7 (noting that he was also known as *shaykh al-qurrā°*); °Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla, *Mu°jam al-mu°allifīn* (15 vols, Damascus: al-Maktaba al-°Arabiyya, 1947–61), vol. 8, p. 281 (listing some of his works on the fourteen readings).

23 A comparison between al-°Aṭṭār's list and the canonical list shows that although the locations are largely the same (Medina, Mecca, Syria, Basra and Kufa), al-°Aṭṭār's list of readers only matches the canonical one in three places: Nāfi° (Medina), Ibn °Āmir (Syria) and °Āṣim (Kufa); and al-°Aṭṭār divides Syria into Damascus and Ḥimṣ.

24 Al-°Aṭṭār maintains that Abū Ḥaywa received his transmission from 'over 70 Companions'. Al-°Aṭṭār, *Mubhij*, f. 7a.

25 Abū Ḥaywa's full name is Shurayḥ ibn Yazīd al-Ḥaḍramī al-Ḥimṣī; he was the °Imām of Ḥimṣ' during his lifetime and had his own reading (*wa-lahu ikhtiyār fī'l-qirā°a*) (Ibn al-Jazarī, *Nashr*, vol. 1, p. 325). For the history of readings in Ḥimṣ before Abū Ḥaywa, see °Aṭwān, *al-Qirā°āt*, pp. 61–186, and especially p. 93 (showing that all earlier readings in the region converged at Abū Ḥaywa).

26 Ibn Mujāhid, *Kitāb al-sab°a*, p. 280; al-Dānī, *Muqni°*, p. 103; Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, p. 12; °Umar and Makram, *Mu°jam*, vol. 2, p. 362.

27 Ibn Mujāhid, *Kitāb al-sab°a*, p. 284; al-Dānī, *Muqni°*, pp. 103–4; Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, p. 12; °Umar and Makram, *Mu°jam*, vol. 2, p. 379.

28 Dānī, *Muqni°*, p. 286; Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, p. 13; °Umar and Makram, *Mu°jam*, vol. 2, p. 397. This does not appear in my copy of Ibn Mujāhid's *Kitāb al-sab°a* (where it should appear at p. 293), but Dutton notes an entry for it in his (Dutton, 'Notes', p. 67, n. 15).

29 Ibn Mujāhid, *Kitāb al-sab°a*, p. 286; al-Dānī, *Muqni°*, p. 104; Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, p. 13; °Umar and Makram, *Mu°jam*, vol. 3, p. 66. Dutton sees 'dashes clearly marking the *shīn*' (Dutton, 'Notes', p. 44), but the manuscript is badly blurred at that spot, so these dashes are less clear to me. Nevertheless, the smudges above the word indicate that the dashes were more likely there than not. Ibn Mujāhid records that Ibn °Āmir alone recited this verse in this way (Ibn Mujāhid, *Kitāb al-sab°a*, p. 325). Al-Ṭabarī points out that most Iraqi and Ḥijāzī readers read *yunshirukum*, and Abū Ja°far had a slightly different pronunciation (*yanshurukum*) (al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi°*, vol. 11, p. 100). Al-Naḥḥās adds Ḥasan and Yazīd ibn al-Qa°qā° (al-Naḥḥās, *I°rāb*, vol. 2, p. 250) (*yunshirukum*). None of the secondary sources list all four individuals together. See °Umar and Makram, *Mu°jam*, vol. 3, p. 66 (listing, *inter alia*, Ibn °Āmir, Abū Ja°far and Ḥasan); Dutton, 'Notes', p. 44 (listing Abū Ja°far and Ḥasan).

30 °Umar and Makram, *Mu°jam*, vol. 3, p. 36. Al-Naḥḥās attributes the variant (*minhumā*) to the Medinans (al-Naḥḥās, *I°rāb*, vol. 2, p. 456). Al-Shawkānī says that the Syrian and Ḥijāzī variant is the dual form – *minhumā* – and that the feminine form – *minhā* – is Iraqi (al-

Shawkānī, *Faḥ al-qarīb*, vol. 3, p. 291). However he lists no references and this appears to be incorrect.

31 °Umar and Makram, *Muʿjam*, vol. 4, p. 95. Al-Naḥḥās records that, in addition to Ibn Kathīr, the Meccan Mujāhid also read the word without assimilating the *nūn* (al-Naḥḥās, *Iʿrāb*, vol. 2, p. 473). See also Ibn Khālawayhi, *Hujja*, p. 137 (noting the permissibility of both readings, without attributions).

32 °Umar and Makram, *Muʿjam*, vol. 4, p. 133.

33 Dutton, 'Notes', p. 45, n. 20, referencing the illustration in William Wright (ed.), *Facsimiles of Manuscripts and Inscriptions: Oriental Series* (London: The Paleographical Society, 1875–83), plate LIX; and Nabia Abbott, *The Rise of the North Arabic Manuscript and its Kur'ānic Development* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1939), plate 6, no. 1. See also Ibn Khālawayhi, *al-Hujja fi'l-qirā'āt al-sabʿ*, ed. Ahmad Farid al-Mazīdī, Introduction by Dr Faṭḥī Ḥijāzī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1999), p. 167 (noting the permissibility of both readings, the *wāw* being 'according to what was established in the Sawad (the outskirts of Baghdad) (ʿalā ḥasb mā thabata fi'l-Sawād)').

34 Dutton, 'Notes', p. 45, n. 22, referencing Charles Rieu, *Supplement to the Catalogue of the Arabic Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London: The British Museum, 1894), p. x. See also Ibn Khālawayhi, *Hujja*, p. 210 (noting the permissibility of both readings, without attributions).

35 See °Umar and Makram, *Muʿjam*, vol. 3, p. 62. Yaḥyā ibn al-Ḥārith studied under Ibn °Āmir and became the primary reader of Damascus after him. See al-Dhahabī, *Maʿrifat al-qurrāʾ al-kibār*, ed. Bashshār °Awwād Maʿrūf et al. (2 vols, Beirut: Muʿassasat al-Risāla, 1984), vol. 1, p. 40.

36 See °Umar and Makram, *Muʿjam*, vol. 2, p. 462. Abū'l-Dardā° is said to have begun reading the Qur'an during the lifetime of Muḥammad in his native Medina, then assumed a judgeship in Damascus, where he taught Qur'anic reading at the Damascus Mosque. Ibn °Āmir is said to have succeeded him as the head teacher and reader there. See al-Dhahabī, *Maʿrifat al-qurrāʾ*, vol. 1, p. 40.

37 Note that Dutton mentions an additional 'major' variant: on the rendering of the name *Ibrāhīm*, which Ibn °Āmir pronounces as *Ibrāhām*. According to Dutton, the Syrian codex adopts the latter spelling 33 times out of a total of 69 occurrences in the Qur'an, and our manuscript contains six Syrian spellings and fourteen 'ordinary' spellings (Dutton, 'Notes', p. 45). I do not count these spelling differences here, because I restrict *major* orthographical variants to consonantal differences that do not involve weak letters such as the *alif* or *yāʾ* in *Ibrāhīm*.

38 Using Ibn °Āmir as shorthand for the Syrian reading (Dutton, 'Notes', pp. 44–5), Dutton also notes that for these same shared traits, the Qur'an manuscript Paris MS 328a is also to be considered the reading of Ibn °Āmir. Cf. Yasin Dutton, 'An Early *Muṣḥaf* According to the Reading of Ibn °Āmir', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 3:1 (2001), pp. 71–89, esp. 72–4.

39 Chronologically, the last of the canonical seven, ten and fourteen readers were al-Kisāʾī (d. 189/805), Khalaf (d. 229/843) and Yaḥyā al-Yazīdī (d. 202/817–18), respectively.

40 There is nothing to suggest that Abū Ḥaywa's chain of transmission relates back to Abū'l-Dardā° directly. Rather, the *ṭabaqāt* works trace Abū Ḥaywa's chain ultimately back to Muʿādh ibn Jabal (d. 18/639), who died soon after Abū'l-Dardā°. °Aṭwān points to substantial contacts between the inhabitants of Damascus and Ḥimṣ during the early period, particularly amongst Qur'an readers, who he says had something of a rivalry between cities (see °Aṭwān, *al-Qirāʾāt*, pp. 13–15, p. 92). As he notes, Ḥimṣ had been an important frontier town during the period of conquests, Damascus became the seat of power once the Umayyads gained power in 40/660, and the power seat shifted again when the °Abbāsids assumed power in

132/750. It is reasonable to assume that inhabitants of each city perhaps had different concerns, orientations and resources with each shift. There is no telling for sure whether or how political affairs, together with regional population growth and migrations east, may have lessened the fluidity between Syrian towns. But a Ḥimṣī reading that substantially relates to and is perhaps intertwined with an early Damascene one surely suggests that there was transfer between those two cities when this Qur'an (or when the one on whose basis it was copied) was written.

41 See Dutton, 'Notes', p. 45–8.

42 Some are no more than scribal errors, which cannot serve a diagnostic function. For example, at Q. 9:46 (f. 12b.19) (*fa-thabbatahum*), the *thā'* only has two dots, and the resulting word (*t-b-t*) has no meaning. Other examples are found at: Q. 10:50 (f. 16b.19) (*°-r-°-t-y-m* instead of *a-ra'aytum*); Q. 22:19 (f. 59a.24) (*t-y-b* instead of *thiyāb*); Q. 22:57 (f. 61a.17) (*bi-āyānītā* instead of *bi-āyātīnā*).

43 °Umar and Makram, *Mu'jam*, vol. 2, p. 429.

44 None of the manuscript's dropped weak letters conform to any known variants or grammatical conventions: a dropped *alif al-wiqāya* from *āwaw* at Q. 8:72 (f. 10a.17) and Q. 8:74 (f. 10a.25); a dropped *alif maqṣūra* in *arākahum* at Q. 8:43 (f. 9a.15); a dropped *alif* (*hamza* seat) from *'mra'atahu* at Q. 7:83 (f. 2b.11), from *dhara'nā* at Q. 7:179 (f. 6b.16), from *ta'wīluhu* at Q. 10:39 (f. 16a.24), from *'tma'anna* at Q. 22:11 (f. 59a.3), from *bawwa'nā* at Q. 22:26 (f. 59b.13), from *fa-ka'ayyin* at Q. 22:45 (f. 60b.13), from *ka'ayyin* at Q. 22:48 (f. 60b. 21), and from the second word of *ra'aw annahum* at Q. 7:149 (5a.8) (or alternatively a dropped *alif al-wiqāya* from the first word); a dropped *wāw* (*hamza* seat) from *awliyā'uhu* in the second occurrence at Q. 8:34 (f. 18b.20); a dropped *yā'* (*hamza* seat) in *la-in* at Q. 7:134 (f. 4a.21) (which is written differently in the other four instances of the word – at Q. 7:149 (f. 5a.8), Q. 7:189 (f. 7a.12), Q. 9:75 (f. 14a.7), and Q. 10:22 (f. 15b.4)); an inconsistently dropped *alif*, e.g. in *'adhāb* (appearing both with and without an *alif*), *qāla* (the same); and the consistently omitted *hamza*. As for the *hamza*, some readers, like Nāfi°, have a tendency to elide *hamza* into other consonants (*tashīl*); it is impossible to determine from the skeletal text alone whether this manuscript follows one of those readers, as its *hamza* omissions reflect the general orthographical practice through the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century at least. See H. Fleisch, art. 'Hamza' in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, vol. 3, pp. 150–2; H. Fleisch, art. 'Arabia (Arabic Writing)' in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, vol. 1, pp. 367–416; Yasin Dutton, 'Red Dots, Green Dots, Yellow Dots and Blue: Some Reflections on the Vocalisation of Early Qur'anic Manuscripts – Part II', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 2:1 (2000), pp. 1–24, p. 13. Accord E. Beck, 'Der 'uṭmānische Kodex in der Koranlesung des zweiten Jahrhunderts', *Orientalia* 14 (1945), pp. 355–73, p. 370 (quoting al-Farrā') (recording instances of dropped medial *alif* (*hamza* seats) in early Qur'an copies that cannot be connected to a specific reader or location).

45 There is an additional *alif maqṣūra* (an extra tooth) in *bi-āyātīnā* and *bi-āyātīhi* throughout; additional *alif mamdūdas* after the *lām* in *'allām* at Q. 9:78 (f. 14a.12), in *la-in* at Q. 10:22 (f. 15b.5), and in *jannāt* in various places, e.g. at Q. 9:72 (ff. 13b.24 and 13b.23) and Q. 22:56 (f. 61a.16), but not in several other cases, e.g. at Q. 22:14 (f. 59a.10) and Q. 22:23 (f. 59b.6); an additional medial *hamza* seat (an extra tooth) at Q. 8:29 (f. 8b.10) (*sayyi'ātikum*) (which accords with Ḥamza's reading, see °Abd al-Laṭīf al-Khaṭīb, *Mu'jam al-qirā'āt* (11 vols, Damascus: Dār Sa'd al-Dīn, 2002), vol. 3, p. 284); an additional final *yā'* to render *kīdūnī* at Q. 7:195 (f. 7a.21) (consistent with Ibn °Amir's reading, among others, see al-Khaṭīb, *Mu'jam*, vol. 3, p. 343), *tastahyī* at Q. 7:127 (f. 4a.6), and *yuhyī* at Q. 7:158 (f. 5b.13) and at Q. 10:56 (f. 17a.7) among other places; and an additional *alif* after the *ṣīn* of *sayyi'a* at Q. 7:95 (f. 3a.12). These generally follow no known variants.

46 For example, *alif maqṣūra* becomes *alif mamdūda* in *sukārā* at Q. 22:2 (f.58b.7 and 58b.8) and in the two instances of *tarānī* at Q. 7:143 (f. 4b.17 and 4b.18), but not in the instances of

form of this word elsewhere, e.g., at Q. 7:198 (f. 7a.25) *tarāhum*; *alif mamdūda* becomes *alif maqṣūra* in *bi-liqā'* at Q. 10:45 (f. 16b.11); and the final *tā'* *ṭawīla* becomes a final *hā'* or *tā'* *marbūta* in *kalimat(u rabbika)* at Q. 7:137 (f. 4b.4). In addition, there is a spelling anomaly in the word *shay'* when it is non-accusative. The word is often spelled as expected – *shīn-yā'* with no stand-alone *hamza* at the end, but also appears frequently with an *alif* between the *shīn* and the *yā'*.

47 Al-<sup>o</sup>Atṭār, *Mubhij*, f. 9b; al-Dānī, *Bayān*, p. 155; al-Mutawallī, *Tahqīq*, f. 9b; Spitaler, *Die Verszählung*, p. 37. Cf. Dutton, 'Notes', p. 50. There are five disputed verse-endings, only one of which falls in this fragment of the manuscript: Q. 7:137.

48 A final symbol is inexplicable. After the last aya, Q. 7:206, a rosette surrounds the one-verse symbol. This cannot have been intended as a ten-verse rosette, since the 100-verse *hā'* is clearly marked just five ayas before. It probably is not a symbol to indicate the *sajda* at the end of this aya either, since such symbols have not been placed elsewhere in suras containing *sajadāt* (as mentioned in the sura heading). For instance, no such symbol appears at Q. 22:18, Q. 16:49 or Q. 17:107–9.

49 The *rā'* and the *bā'* are unreadable, but the bottom of the *wāw* is somewhat readable and the tail of the <sup>o</sup>*ayn* – spaced two letters from the *wāw* bottom – is unmistakable.

50 Al-<sup>o</sup>Atṭār mentions that 'some of the early verse-counting readers (*ba<sup>o</sup>d al-<sup>o</sup>āddīn min al-qurrā' al-awwalīn*)' place the second seventh at Q. 7:170 (al-<sup>o</sup>Atṭār, *Mubhij*, ff. 26b–27a). For the Kufan count, see Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-maṣāḥif*, p. 127.

51 Al-<sup>o</sup>Atṭār, *Mubhij*, ff. 9b–10a; al-Dānī, *Bayān*, p. 158; al-Mutawallī, *Tahqīq*, f. 10b; Spitaler, *Die Verszählung*, pp. 37–8. Cf. Dutton, 'Notes', p. 50–2. There are three disputed verse-endings: Q. 8:36, 42, and 62. Kufa counts 75 total ayas, the Ḥijāz and Basra 76, and Syria 77.

52 Al-<sup>o</sup>Atṭār, *Mubhij*, ff. 10a–10b (*Sūrat al-Barā'a*); al-Dānī, *Bayān*, p. 160; al-Mutawallī, *Tahqīq*, f. 11a; Spitaler, *Die Verszählung*, pp. 38–9. Cf. Dutton, 'Notes', p. 52–3. There are four disputed verse-endings: Q. 9:3, 36, 39 and 70. Al-Dānī records the first three of them: Q. 9:3, 39, and 70; al-<sup>o</sup>Atṭār and al-Mutawallī record the fourth: Q. 9:36 (*al-dīn al-qayyim*) as unique to the Ḥimṣī reading.

53 Al-<sup>o</sup>Atṭār, *Mubhij*, f. 10b; al-Dānī, *Bayān*, p. 163; al-Mutawallī, *Tahqīq*, f. 11b; Spitaler, *Die Verszählung*, p. 39. Cf. Dutton, 'Notes', p. 53. There are three disputed verse-endings: two in Q. 10:22 and one in Q. 10:57.

54 Al-<sup>o</sup>Atṭār, *Mubhij*, f. 10b; al-Dānī, *Bayān*, p. 165; al-Mutawallī, *Tahqīq*, f. 12a; Spitaler, *Die Verszählung*, pp. 39–40. Cf. Dutton, 'Notes', p. 54–5. There are seven disputed verse-endings: Q. 11:54, 74, 82 (two places), 86, 118 and 121.

55 Al-<sup>o</sup>Atṭār, *Mubhij*, f. 10b. But see al-Mutawallī (listing only a Syrian variant), *Tahqīq*, f. 12b; al-Dānī, *Bayān*, p. 165 (same); Spitaler, *Die Verszählung*, p. 39 (listing only a Damascene variant).

56 Spitaler only lists the Iraqi system here. Spitaler, *Die Verszählung*, p. 40. Al-<sup>o</sup>Atṭār lists this as a Ḥimṣī verse-ending, and says that it accords with just Kufa (rather than Spitaler's Iraq – which includes Basra as well) (al-<sup>o</sup>Atṭār, *Mubhij*, f. 10b). Al-Dānī and al-Mutawallī make no mention of this variant.

57 Al-<sup>o</sup>Atṭār, *Mubhij*, f. 10b; Spitaler, *Die Verszählung*, p. 40. Al-Dānī and al-Mutawallī do not record this variant.

58 Al-<sup>o</sup>Atṭār, *Mubhij*, f. 10b; Spitaler, *Die Verszählung*, p. 40. Al-Mutawallī *does* record this variant.

59 Al-<sup>o</sup>Atṭār, *Mubhij*, f. 11a; al-Dānī, *Bayān*, p. 167; al-Mutawallī, *Tahqīq*, f. 12b. This sura is not in Spitaler. Cf. Dutton, 'Notes', p. 55.

60 Al-°Aṭṭār, *Mubhij*, f. 11a; al-Dānī, *Bayān*, p. 169; al-Mutawallī, *Tahqīq*, f. 13a; Spitaler, *Die Verszählung*, pp. 40–1. Cf. Dutton, 'Notes', p. 55–6. There are six disputed ayas: Q. 13:5, 16 (two places), 17, 18, and 23. Al-Dānī does not record a variant for Q. 13:17. For that ending, see al-°Aṭṭār, *Mubhij*, f. 11a; al-Mutawallī, *Tahqīq*, f. 13a; Spitaler, *Die Verszählung*, pp. 40–1.

61 Al-°Aṭṭār, *Mubhij*, ff. 11a–11b; al-Dānī, *Bayān*, p. 171; al-Mutawallī, *Tahqīq*, f. 13b; Spitaler, *Die Verszählung*, pp. 41–2. Cf. Dutton, 'Notes', p. 56–7. There are seven disputed ayas: Q. 14:1, 5, 9, 19, 24, 33 and 42.

62 Al-°Aṭṭār, *Mubhij*, f. 11a; Spitaler, *Die Verszählung*, p. 42. al-Mutawallī, *Tahqīq*, f. 13a, records only a 'Shāmī' total verse count of 55 and a Ḥimṣī total verse count of 54. Al-Dānī does not list data on the Ḥimṣī reading.

63 Note that Spitaler, *Die Verszählung*, p. 42, lists this as another exclusive Ḥimṣī variant. Al-Dānī and al-Mutawallī simply mention Syria, as does al-°Aṭṭār.

64 The very end of the line is obscured.

65 See Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-maṣāḥif*, p. 127 (listing the third seventh after 'alay ... in wa-mā kāna liya 'alaykum min sulṭān, which is Kufan Q. 14:22); al-°Aṭṭār, *Mubhij*, f. 26a.

66 Al-°Aṭṭār, *Mubhij*, f. 11b; al-Dānī, *Bayān*, p. 173. al-Mutawallī and Spitaler do not include this sura. Cf. Dutton, 'Notes', p. 57. There are no disputed ayas.

67 Al-°Aṭṭār, *Mubhij*, ff. 11b–12a; al-Dānī, *Bayān*, p. 175; al-Mutawallī, *Tahqīq*, f. 14a. Spitaler does not include this sura. Cf. Dutton, 'Notes', p. 57. There are no disputed ayas.

68 Al-°Aṭṭār, *Mubhij*, f. 12a (called *Sūrat Banī Isrā'īl*); al-Dānī, 177, al-Mutawallī, *Tahqīq*, f. 15a; Spitaler, *Die Verszählung*, p. 42. Cf. Dutton, 'Notes', p. 57–8. There is one disputed aya: Q. 17:107.

69 Dutton offers an alternative explanation: that the rosette at Q. 17:89 rather than at Q. 17:90 was overlooked (presumably, by a ten-verse rosette marker counting individual ayas) when the rosettes were added. See Dutton, 'Notes', p. 58.

70 Al-°Aṭṭār, *Mubhij*, f. 12a; al-Dānī, *Bayān*, p. 179, al-Mutawallī, *Tahqīq*, ff. 13a–15b; Spitaler, *Die Verszählung*, pp. 42–3. Cf. Dutton, 'Notes', p. 58–9. There are eleven disputed ayas: Q. 18:13, 22–3, 32, 35, 84–6, 89, 92 and 103.

71 The heading reads *Sūrat al-Kahf wa-hiya mi'a wa-sitt ...* (f. 43a, 7), though the letter after the *tā'* from the broken *sitta* is obscured enough that one could imagine it reading *sab* of *sab'a* as well. All the other sura headings align to the Damascene system, and there is no reason to suppose that this one alone diverges from that pattern.

72 Cf. Dutton, 'Notes', p. 58–9.

73 Al-°Aṭṭār, *Mubhij*, ff. 12a–12b; al-Dānī, *Bayān*, p. 181; al-Mutawallī, *Tahqīq*, ff. 15b–16a; Spitaler, *Die Verszählung*, p. 43. Cf. Dutton, 'Notes', p. 59. There are three disputed ayas: Q. 19:1, 41 and 75.

74 Spitaler, *Die Verszählung*, p. 43. Al-°Aṭṭār records that the Iraqis agree on the total verse count as 98 (*Mubhij*, f. 12a).

75 The place of *sajda* comes at Q. 19:58 (*idhā tutlā 'alayhim āyātu'l-rahmāni kharrū sujjadan wa-bukīyyā*) (f. 49b, 9); but as in other such places – e.g. Q. 17:107–9 (f. 43a.2), there is no *sajda* symbol to mark the place.

76 It is possible that the symbol simply has been cut off at the edge of the page, but this is unlikely, as the space remaining on the page after *ṣiliyyan* seems large enough for a symbol. Déroche and Nosedā also list this verse-ending as missing rather than obscured, though Dutton ('Notes', p. 59) does not discuss the absence of this symbol.

77 Al-<sup>°</sup>Atṭār, *Mubhij*, f. 12b (listing 23 disputed ayas); al-Dānī, *Bayān*, pp. 183–4 (listing 21 disputed ayas); al-Mutawallī, *Tahqīq*, ff. 17a–17a (listing 21 disputed ayas); Spitaler, *Die Verszählung*, pp. 44–7 (listing 23 disputed ayas). Cf. Dutton, 'Notes', p. 60–2 (listing 24 disputed ayas). At the largest count, there are 24 disputed ayas: Q. 20:1, 33, 34, 39 (two places), 40 (three places), 41, 47, 77, 78, 86 (two places), 87, 88 (two places), 89, 92, 95, 106, 123, 124, and 131. Al-<sup>°</sup>Atṭār's list is one short of Dutton's because he does not include Q. 20:95 (*yā Sāmīriyy*), which is not counted in the Ḥimṣī reading, except for in records of two minority Ḥimṣī schools. See Spitaler, *Die Verszählung*, p. 45; cf. Dutton, 'Notes', p. 60. Al-Dānī does not include any of the uniquely Ḥimṣī variations, and al-Mutawallī includes some but not all of them.

78 Al-<sup>°</sup>Atṭār records that the Ḥimṣī reading has 138 ayyas (al-<sup>°</sup>Atṭār, *Mubhij*, f. 12b). Al-Mutawallī, *Tahqīq*, f. 16a, also records this uniquely Ḥimṣī total verse count, but al-Dānī and Spitaler do not.

79 Al-<sup>°</sup>Atṭār, *Mubhij*, ff. 12b–13a; al-Dānī, *Bayān*, p. 187; al-Mutawallī, *Tahqīq*, f. 17a; Spitaler, *Die Verszählung*, p. 47. Cf. Dutton, 'Notes', p. 62. There is one disputed aya: Q. 21:66.

80 Al-<sup>°</sup>Atṭār, *Mubhij*, ff. 13a–13b; al-Dānī, *Bayān*, p. 189; al-Mutawallī, *Tahqīq*, f. 17b; Spitaler, *Die Verszählung*, pp. 47–8. Cf. Dutton, 'Notes', p. 62–3. There are five disputed ayas: Q. 22:19, 20, 42, 43 and 78. The last few ayas are not in this position of the MS.

81 Note that al-<sup>°</sup>Atṭār mentions that 74 is the total verse count for Syria; but al-Mutawallī lists 74 for 'Shām' and 75 for Ḥimṣ. This is confusing, because, according to al-Mutawallī, 'Shām' means Syria as I have been using it, i.e. a shared Damascene and Ḥimṣī reading. See al-Mutawallī, *Tahqīq*, f. 6b (*fa-in wāfaqahumā* (i.e. Ibn <sup>°</sup>Āmir and Yaḥyā) *Abū Ḥaywa fa-[qīla]-Shāmī*). Moreover, al-Mutawallī's list of internal verse counts show no Damascene-Ḥimṣī divergence. Perhaps his mention of the total verse count differences refers to a minority Ḥimṣī variant that is not considered by al-<sup>°</sup>Atṭār and that in any case does not apply to our manuscript.

82 This section takes only a portion of the manuscript as a sample for the detailed examination of stylistic features. It covers ff. 1–19a (Q. 7:42–9:95, Q. 10:9–109) and ff. 58–61 (Q. 22:1–72).

83 See François Déroche, *The Abbasid Tradition: Qur'ans of the 8th to the 10th Centuries A.D.* (London and Oxford: The Nour Foundation in association with Azimuth Editions and Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 15–16, pp. 27–9 (description), pp. 38–47 (charts). See also François Déroche, 'Les écritures coraniques anciennes. Bilan et perspectives', *Revue des Etudes Islamiques* 48 (1980), pp. 207–24, esp. p. 211, pp. 215–17. Compare Gruendler, *Arabic Scripts*, pp. 134–7 (description), p. 141 (chart).

84 On the *yā*, see Grohmann, 'The Problem of Dating'. He concludes that the early Qur'an manuscript, MS P. Michaëldidēs 32, dates to the 1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> century. Whelan also makes note of this type of *yā* (Whelan, 'Some Early Qur'an Manuscripts', p. 116). Other than in a few places, e.g. Q. 7:104 (f. 3b.4), where *Mūsā* appears without one, this manuscript uses the reverted *yā*, e.g. at Q. 10:83 (f. 18a.7) (where *Mūsā* appears with one). On the *dāl/dhāl*, *ṭā*/*ṣā*, see Grohmann, 'The Problem of Dating', pp. 225–6 (comparing his manuscript to one that appears in *Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer: Führer durch die Ausstellung* (Wien: Selbst Verlag der Sammlung, Alfred Hölder, 1894)). Comparisons of some letters that appear in Grohmann's analysis of MS Paris 328a (which he mentions in his detailed treatment) and in our manuscript, show that letters in the three manuscripts are stylistically similar.

85 Whelan, 'Writing the Word', pp. 113–15.

86 Dutton contends that the manuscript appeared to be a large undertaking that would have required patronage. He reasons that, because it follows a Syrian system, the patronage was

probably from a Syrian government, which would mean that it would have had to be during the period when the Umayyad caliphate was in Syria (40/660–132/750) and probably before Walid (*reg.* 86/705–96/715) – who reportedly patronised Qur'ans in the Kūfīc script. For him, the manuscript may date to the period between 30/650 (after the °Uthmānic compilation, as it is an °Uthmānic codex) and 85/704 (before the reign of Walid's Kūfīc-patronage) (Dutton, 'Notes', p. 65–6). Cf. Grohmann, 'The Problem of Dating', p. 222 (dating this manuscript to the 1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> century). This is quite plausible, but three features of the manuscript raise questions about this patronage scenario. The manuscript's reading tradition is eclectically Syrian, i.e. produced over a period of time and a stretch of space that started in Ḥimṣ (or with a scribe who followed that reading) perhaps in the first century and ended in Damascus (or with scribes who followed that reading) perhaps within decades thereafter. In addition, the manuscript is unfinished (many of the folios not included in the facsimile are missing the later illumination). Finally, if the Ḥijāzī script continued to be used in Qur'ans beyond the 1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> century, and if local governors could also patronise Qur'an production, this manuscript easily could have post-dated Walid. See, e.g., °Aṭwān, *al-Qirā'ār*, pp. 13–30 (his account of Qur'anic education and patronage under the Umayyads). All of this notwithstanding, Dutton's dating is just as plausible as these other scenarios.

87 M. Amari first designated the type of script that appears in MS Or. 2165 as 'Ḥijāzī' based on Ibn al-Nadīm's description of early scripts in his *Fihrist*. See Amari, 'Bibliographie primitive du Coran' in G. Salvo Cosso (ed.), *Centenario della nascita di Michele Amari* (2 vols, Palermo: n.p., 1910), vol. 1, pp. 1–22, cited in François Déroche, art. 'Manuscripts of the Qur'ān' in Jane Dammen McAuliffe (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān* (5 vols, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2003), vol. 3, pp. 254–75; compare Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, p. 14. Bergsträsser also listed some script types (one of them Ḥijāzī) based on his collection of early papyri (Bergsträsser, *Zur ältesten Geschichte der kufischen Schrift: Zeitschrift des Deutschen Vereins für Buchwesen und Schrifttum* (1919), pp. 54–66). Nabia Abbott then detailed features of this script in *The Rise of the North Arabic Script and its Kūr'ānic Development* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1939), in which she identified the right-leaning *alif* that appears in our manuscript as a developed form of the first-century Meccan/Ḥijāzī script, terming it '*mā'il*' and dating it to the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century (Abbott, *The Rise of the North Arabic Script*, pp. 17–24). Grohmann followed with an attempt to refine Abbott's categorisation, applying a paleographical analysis to several early Qur'anic manuscripts to conclude that many (including our manuscript – MS Or. 2165) date back to the 1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> century (Grohmann, 'The Problem of Dating', esp. p. 222). Finally, Déroche developed the typology of Qur'anic scripts, and concluded that *mā'il* was no independent script type, but Ḥijāzī was; it encompassed the so-called *mā'il* scripts described by Abbott and Grohmann, and he dated it to the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> century (Déroche, *The Abbasid Tradition*, pp. 15–16). See also Déroche, 'Les écritures'; Déroche, 'Manuscripts of the Qur'ān'. Cf. E. Rezvan, art. 'Orthography' in Jane Dammen McAuliffe (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān* (5 vols, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2003), vol. 3, pp. 604–8; Solagne Ory, art. 'Calligraphy' in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, vol. 3, pp. 279–86.

88 See generally Gruendler, *Arabic Scripts*; cf. Grohman, *Arabic Papyri*, pp. 83–4.

89 Note that the manuscript shows places in which the scribe apparently forgot to leave enough space for placing the one-verse symbols when he went back over the text to do so. I suppose this to have been the process given all the other evidence suggesting that the same scribe who wrote the text placed the one-verse symbols, and that there are places where a one-verse symbol has been squeezed in between ayas. One such instance appears in this section – similar to the instance at Q. 18:18 discussed above (a single column of six strokes). This time, instead of Scribe A's usual two columns of three vertical strokes, there is just one column of four strokes. It does not make sense that Scribe A intended to drop that verse-symbol, since to do so at that and other such points in the manuscript would depart from any known system,



including that of Ḥimṣ. For other examples of 'squeezed in' verse-ending symbols, see Q. 14:5 (f. 30a.10), Q. 13:35 (f. 29b.10), Q. 18:25 (f. 44a.17), Q. 18:26 (f. 44a.21), Q. 18:66 (f. 46a.22), Q. 19:54 (f. 49b.2), Q. 19:68 (f. 50a.2), Q. 20:17 (f. 51.5). Grohman, *Arabic Papyri*, pp. 83–4, mentions that these dots appeared in the form of short dashes in early Qur'ans.

90 The first scribe (A) includes no right foot-serif on his *alifs*; the second scribe (B) does. Scribe A's *lām-alif* is somewhat angular at the bottom, with a relatively narrow gap between the two stems; Scribe B's is formed with a loop at the bottom and has a wide gap between its two stems. Scribe A's initial *jīm/hāʾ/khāʾ* is formed with a straight diagonal stroke above the line connected to the right of a vertical line extending left; Scribe B's diagonal stroke has a slight concave curve. The tail of Scribe A's *nūn/ṣād/dād/sīn/shīn* is a downward curve with a 'tuck' to the left and uniform line-thickness. Scribe B stops a bit short on the tuck, and turns the pen for a taper.

91 Each rosette is red, except at Q. 7:121, where it is brown with a faded reddish tinge. The number of dots vary, depending on the amount of space available – from seven to nine dots, as in Q. 7:131 and Q. 7:141, to as many as twelve, as in Q. 7:71, Q. 8:10, Q. 10:44. (a 'rosette' consisting of a red circle surrounding the one-verse symbol and a series of dots in turn surrounding it).

92 Dots inside: Q. 7:81–161 (but note that Q. 7:121 is illegible); Q. 8:40–60 (perhaps); Q. 8:70–9:89; and not Q. 10:15 and Q. 10:30 (which are the oddly placed symbols, discussed above); and nowhere after. The solid circle of the problematic rosette at Q. 10:15 (f. 15a) is unusually thick as if traced over more than once, as is the one that follows it at Q. 10:30 (f. 16a). Perhaps these were later additions to fill lacunae – one mistaken (Q. 10:15 instead of Q. 10:20) and the other correct (Q. 10:30). Indeed, some rosettes (e.g. throughout ff. 43a–b) are missing altogether.

93 Q. 7:101 (f. 3b), 201 (f. 7b); Q. 10:101 (f. 18b); Q. 11:101 (f. 23a); Q. 16:100 (f. 37a); Q. 17:101 (f. 42b); Q. 18:104 (f. 47b); Q. 20:98 (f. 53a). At Q. 12:100 (f. 27a), the bottom left corner of the folio is cropped and badly blurred. An additional mark can be made out above the last word of the verse (*al-ḥakīm*). Though it is very blurred, this presumably was the 100-verse symbol. At Q. 21:101 (f. 58a), the only other hundredth verse in the facsimile, there is no distinguishing mark other than a one-verse symbol at this point.

94 For example, at Q. 7:101 the dots of the circular single-verse count are oddly connected in brown ink, as if they were the start of a brown rosette (like the brown *hāʾ* above) that did not receive its surrounding dots. The ten-verse rosette at Q. 7:201 has clearly been erased and the 100-verse *hāʾ* placed atop the one-verse symbol. At Q. 10:101, no attempt has been made to erase the ten-verse rosette, perhaps because it is so intertwined with the surrounding letters (*nūn* of the preceding verse, *fāʾ* of the following verse, and the stems of the *lām-alif* from the verse below) that doing so would compromise the text. Thus, only in this instance does the ten-verse rosette appear along with the 100-verse *hāʾ*. The presence of the rosette may explain the additional note '*miʾa*' (the only instance of this) to ensure that a reader does not mistakenly interpret this point as merely a ten-verse symbol. Q. 11:101 and Q. 17:101 are accompanied by *hāʾ* over one or two (three?) (see f. 23a and f. 42b) large red dots placed in the text where a one-verse symbol would have been. Only the *hāʾ*'s at Q. 18:104 and Q. 20:98 display no modifications of the one-verse count.

95 For example, Q. 7:101 (brown), 201 (fading, brownish red) and Q. 20:98 (brown) appear similar to one another as does Q. 17:101 to Q. 18:104. As suggested above, the placement of 100-verse symbols indicates that the copyist who placed them was Syrian, and inserted them through collation with a Damascene text.

96 The first is written in a brown ink that is smoother and more faded than that of the text. No space was left to accommodate this mark, leaving the words interspersed through the text.

Although it appears to be a script similar to that of the text, the letters are much thinner and they do not have the characteristic leaning of the Ḥijāzī script. The second appears similar in style to the first, but is written in green ink.

97 Dutton, 'Notes', p. 63–4.

98 R. Paret, art. 'Qirā'a' in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, vol. 5, pp. 217–9.

99 Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, vol. 1, pp. 27–8. See also Modarressi, 'Early Debates', p. 14 (noting that the Qur'an's text was established well before ʿUthmān's compilation, and that debates over its integrity arose in the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century as a result of sectarian and political conflicts).

100 Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, vol. 1, p. 28 (recounting the story that Ḥudhayfa ibn al-Yamān returned from the battle in Armenia (in 30/650), requesting ʿUthmān to compile a standard version of the text to quell the disputes he observed at battle); cf. al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, vol. 1, pp. 164–5 (noting other versions of the story and triggering-events for the compilation).

101 See, e.g., Abū ʿUbayd, *Faḍā'il*, pp. 200–3 (listing twelve versions); cf. Makkī ibn Abī Ṭālib al-Qaysī, *Kitāb al-ibāna 'an ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*, ed. Muḥyi'l-Dīn Ramaḍān (Damascus: Dār al-Ma'mūn, 1979), pp. 53–4, pp. 78–85 (listing versions); Diyā' al-Dīn ʿItr, *al-Aḥruf al-sab'a wa-manzilat al-qirā'āt minhā* (Beirut: Dār al-Bashā'ir al-Islāmiyya, 1988), pp. 57–80 (same).

102 See Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-nihāya fī ṭabaqāt al-qurrā'*, ed. Ibbān ibn ʿAysūn (3 vols, Egypt: n.p., 1933–5), vol. 2, pp. 17–18; Ibn al-Jazarī, *Nashr*, vol. 1, p. 34; al-Dhahabī, *Ma'rīfat al-qurrā'*, vol. 1, p. 72. Note that elsewhere, Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 1, p. 255, mentions al-Dūrī as one of the first to compile a reading, and Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 55, mentions records of several earlier works.

103 See Abū ʿUbayd, *Faḍā'il*, pp. 200–3 (listing twelve versions). For others, see, for example, al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, pp. 11–20 (recounting 38 versions of the *aḥruf* ḥadīth in the introduction to his *tafsīr*); al-Dānī, *Muqni'*, Introduction; Ibn al-Jazarī, *Nashr*, vol. 1, p. 35.

104 See Abū ʿUbayd, *Faḍā'il*, p. 203 (equating *aḥruf* with Arabic dialects (*luḡhāt*), of which the ʿUthmānic codex incorporated just one); Ibn Qutayba, *Ta'wīl mushkil al-Qur'ān*, p. 42 (implicitly agreeing, by identifying *aḥruf* in the pre-ʿUthmānic codices); al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, pp. 20–4, pp. 28–9 (same, adding that the single text accommodated multiple readings, which should not be equated with the other six *aḥruf* no longer extant); Makkī, *al-Ibāna*, pp. 21–4, pp. 53–8 (that the ʿUthmānic codex is most likely a single *ḥarf*, but may include more). See also al-Dānī's introduction to *Muqni'* (that the ʿUthmānic codex was the singularly revealed Qur'anic skeletal text, which accommodated multiple readings); Ibn al-Jazarī, *Nashr*, vol. 1, p. 15 (that 'any reading with [these three elements] is authentic (*qirā'a ṣaḥīḥa*)', and 'is one of the seven *aḥruf* (*al-aḥruf al-sab'a*)'). For a lengthy discussion of the debates, see Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī (d. 403/1013), *al-Intiṣār li-naql al-Qur'ān* (Alexandria, Egypt: Munshāt al-Ma'ārif, n.d.), pp. 68–9, pp. 116–23.

105 There are numerous books attributed to leading readers in each geographical region and their pupils. See, e.g., Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, pp. 44–7; al-Dhahabī, *Ma'rīfat al-qurrā'*, vol. 1, p. 127; Ibn al-Jazarī, *Nashr*, vol. 1, pp. 33–4.

106 Makkī, *al-Ibāna*, p. 38.

107 Makkī, *al-Ibāna*, p. 38.

108 For more on the history of patronage for the Qur'an during the Umayyad and early ʿAbbāsīd reigns, see ʿAtwān, *al-Qirā'āt*, pp. 13–30 (noting, in part, that Caliph ʿAbd al-Mālik ibn Marwān in Damascus is said to have first commanded people to memorise the Qur'an and inaugurated a continuing system of Umayyad and ʿAbbāsīd patronage for Qur'anic studies).

109 For more on Abān, see Modarressi, *Tradition and Survival*, pp. 111–12 (noting that Abān ibn Taghlib – though a student of ʿĀṣim – had an independent reading; and that he should not

be confused with Abān ibn Yazīd ibn Aḥmad al-Baṣrī al-ʿAṭṭār, who was a grammarian, a younger contemporary of Abān ibn Tahglīb, and a fellow student of and transmitter from ʿĀṣim). Other readers on Ibn al-Nadīm's list of independent readings include Abū ʿAmr (d. 159/775) (one of the canonical seven), Khalaf ibn Hishām (d. 229/843–4) (one of the canonical fourteen), Ibn Qutayba and the grammarian Thaʿlab (d. 291/904). Ibn al-Nadīm also references readers who documented differences between two independent readings. See *Fihrist*, p. 55, and the text accompanying the headings for individually listed readers.

110 Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 2, p. 348; Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, vol. 5, p. 644, respectively. For more on these two figures, see Mustafa Shah, 'Exploring the Genesis of Early Arabic Linguistic Thought: Qur'anic Readers and Grammarians of the Kufan Tradition', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 5:2 (2003), pp. 47–78.

111 Ibn Mujāhid notes that he verified aspects of Nāfi's reading from Ibn Sa'd's rescension of his teacher al-Wāqidi's text. Ibn Mujāhid, *Kitāb al-sabʿa*, p. 90. Cf. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 38.

112 Ibn al-Jazarī, *Nashr*, vol. 1, p. 33.

113 See Ibn al-Jazarī, *Nashr*, vol. 1, p. 34.

114 Ibn al-Jazarī, *Nashr*, vol. 1, pp. 34–7.

115 Their contribution has been pointedly detailed by Mustafa Shah in his article, 'Early Arabic Grammarians', pp. 88–92.

116 Shah, 'Early Arabic Grammarians', p. 88. See also Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, pp. 55–7.

117 For instance, Ibn Khālawayhi's *Mukhtaṣar* and Ibn Jinnī's *Muḥtasib*.

118 For descriptions of the *ikhtiyār* methodologies adopted by several grammarians and examples of instances in which Ibn Mujāhid drew upon the grammarians' records for his compilation, see Shah, 'Early Arabic Grammarians', pp. 88–91.

119 See the editor's introduction to al-Akhfash, *Maʿānī*, ed. Fāʿiz Fāris, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (n.p., 1981), pp. 82–7 (listing the other reasons as analogical reasoning to Arabic grammar, rhetorical eloquence, congruity with other verses, and ʿUthmānic orthography).

120 See al-Akhfash, *Maʿānī*, p. 62 (*wa-dhālīka khilāf al-kitāb*). The editor notes that *kitāb* here refers to ʿUthmānic orthography (*al-rasm al-Qurʾānī*).

121 Al-Naḥḥās, *Iʿrāb*, vol. 2, p. 250.

122 Al-Naḥḥās, *Iʿrāb*, vol. 2, p. 456.

123 See Shah, 'Early Arabic Grammarians', pp. 90–1 (citing al-Naḥḥās, *Iʿrāb*, vol. 3, p. 205, p. 166; vol. 4, p. 365; vol. 1, p. 373).

124 So argues Shah in 'Early Arabic Grammarians', pp. 88–92.

125 See Ibn Mujāhid, *Kitāb al-sabʿa*, pp. 47–52 (collecting sources saying that *qirāʾāt* are a sunna; note that incidentally one of the transmissions is through Abū Ḥaywa, see Ibn Mujāhid, *Kitāb al-sabʿa*, p. 50); Ibn al-Jazarī, *Nashr*, vol. 1, p. 13 (stipulating that readings have a valid chain of transmission (*sanad*) and be transmitted between upright, precise readers (*ʿadl, ḍābiṭ*)); al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, vol. 2, p. 204 (expaining the sense in which *qirāʾāt* are a sunna).

126 Ibn Mujāhid, *Kitāb al-sabʿa*, p. 45.

127 Ibn Mujāhid, *Kitāb al-sabʿa*, pp. 45–6.

128 Ibn Mujāhid, *Kitāb al-sabʿa*, p. 49.

129 The students of each canonical reader (*qāriʾ*, to whom is attributed a *qirāʾa*) are labelled according to their proximity to the leading reader. The first generation consists of *ʿruwāt*, who transmit *riwāyāt* (sing. *riwāya*); then came those (also called *ruwāt*) who transmit *wujūh* (sing. *wajh*), then *ṭuruq* (sing. *ṭarīq*). *Ṭuruq* describes readings four levels removed from the

leading reader and however far down the chain goes. Individual syntheses between multiple readers that therefore cannot be placed in a chain are called *ikhtiyār*. See Ibn Jinnī, *Muhtasib*, p. 102.

130 Ibn al-Jazarī, *Nashr*, vol. 1, p. 21, p. 35. For a more complete account of these two trials and the issues at stake, see Shah, 'Early Arabic Grammarians', pp. 78–89.

131 See above, n. 110.

132 Ibn al-Jazarī, *Nashr*, vol. 1, p. 34.

133 There is an additional, unfortunate terminological confusion even among reading scholars, who interchange *qirā'āt* and *hurūf* as well as *hurūf* and *aḥruf*. The latter two terms share the singular form, *ḥarf*, the referent of which is a disputed notion in the context of the *aḥruf* doctrine and which some scholars use to refer to a distinguishing feature of a particular reading in the context of *qirā'āt* catalogs. See Ibn Sinān al-Khafājī, *Sirr al-faṣāḥa* (Cairo: Muḥammad 'Alī Ṣabīḥ, 1969), p. 15; see also Ibn Mujāhid's use of *ḥarf* and *hurūf* to mean variant(s) (above nn. 126–7 and accompanying text). The link between *hurūf* and *aḥruf* seems to have been made as a way of justifying different readings as representing those mentioned as *aḥruf* in the ḥadīth of seven *aḥruf*. See, e.g., Makkī, *al-Ibāna*, pp. 66–7 (that Ibn Mujāhid chose the number seven, in part, to accord with the number of *hurūf* (as *aḥruf*) that were revealed according to the ḥadīth of the *aḥruf* doctrine).

134 See Ibn al-Jazarī, *Nashr*, vol. 1, p. 36. For instance, according to Ibn al-Jazarī, Abū'l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn ʿAmmār al-Mahdawī (of the early 5<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century) reported that some later scholars adopted (*dahaba ilayhi*) Ibn Mujāhid's list of seven as a complete compilation of authentic readings, and then made adherence to them like an absolute obligation (*farḍ maḥtūm*) on lay people (*ʿāmmat al-nās*), such that they accused readers and readings that diverged from it of unbelief. He says that, because the masses knew no better than to conflate Ibn Mujāhid's seven with the seven *aḥruf*, it would have been better if Ibn Mujāhid had chosen to limit his list to less or more than seven to avoid confusion (*shubha*). In a similar vein, Makkī registered his objection to conflating the seven *aḥruf* with Ibn Mujāhid's seven, and insisted emphatically that any reading was one of the seven *aḥruf* and was therefore valid, so long as it had a valid *isnād*, agreed with the ʿUthmānic orthography, and was grammatically sound. Makkī, *al-Ibāna*, pp. 66–7.

135 Ibn al-Jazarī, *Nashr*, vol. 1, p. 15.

136 Ibn al-Jazarī, *Nashr*, vol. 1, p. 15.

137 As suggested in E. Rezvan, 'The Qur'ān and its World – VI: Emergence of the Canon – The Struggle for Uniformity', *Manuscripta orientalia* 4 (1998), pp. 13–54, p. 16; see also Rezvan, art. 'Orthography', (with a brief history of the role of grammar, codification of variants, and *tajwīd* in standardising orthography, along with ideas for understanding the history of the pre-Ibn Mujāhid ʿUthmānic codex).

138 See Alford Welch, art. 'al-Ḳur'ān' in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, vol. 5, pp. 400–32.

139 For a different point of view, see Christopher Melchert, 'Ibn Mujāhid and the Establishment of Seven Qur'anic Readings', *Studia Islamica* 91 (2000), pp. 5–22, p. 18, who argues that the Qur'an scholars and their methods were not closely related to the Ḥadīth scholars and theirs, in terms of an *isnād*-orientation. See also Welch, art. 'al-Ḳur'ān' (cited in Melchert, 'Ibn Mujāhid', p. 18). Perhaps this argument is in reference to readers who post-dated those mentioned by Ibn Mujāhid, for Qur'an scholars – as demonstrated in part by Ibn Mujāhid in his work – were certainly *isnād*-oriented. For each reader on his list of the main seven, Ibn Mujāhid records a chain of transmission that leads back to one or more Companions, and he mentions two prominent students to whom they transmitted their readings (see Ibn Mujāhid, *Kitāb al-sabʿa*, pp. 53–101). It is only after establishing the sound *isnād* credentials that he and other scholars discussed readers in terms of wide-spread

transmission as a basis for viewing them as canonical. For similar treatments by other scholars of the principal canonical works beyond the seven, see below, n. 142. For more on the emphasis in their views on *isnād* vis-à-vis *qirā'āt* (as a transmission-oriented sunna), see above, n. 125 and accompanying text.

140 Shah, 'Early Arabic Grammarians', pp. 72–102. Shāhīn has also commented on this relationship: 'Die nicht-kanonischen Koranlesarten und ihre Bedeutung für die arabische Sprachwissenschaft', in R. Paret (ed.), *Der Koran* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1975).

141 Ibn Mujāhid, *Kitāb al-sabʿa*, p. 49, says: 'A person may prefer (*yastahsin*) a non-canonical (*shādhdh*) reading for himself, such that he reads according to the variants (*min al-ḥurūf*) that have been transmitted from one [or some] of the earlier [readers] individually ('*an baʿd al-awāʾil munfaridatan*); but these [readings nevertheless] are not included in the canonical [agreed-upon] readings'.

142 See Ibn Ghalbūn (d. 399/1008–9), *al-Tadhkira fī'l-qirā'āt al-thamān*, ed. Ayman Rushdī Suwayd (2 vols, Jeddah: al-Jamʿa al-Khayriyya li-Taḥfīz al-Qurʾān al-Karīm bi-Jadda, 1991), vol. 1, pp. 3–10 (especially ch. 1 – *Bāb Dhikr al-asānīd*, listing the *asānīd* and principal students for all eight readers); Ibn Mihrān (d. 381/991–2), *al-Mabsūt fī'l-qirā'āt al-ʿashr*, ed. Subayʿ Ḥamza Ḥakīmī (Damascus: Majmaʿ al-Lughā al-ʿArabiyya, ca 1981); Ibn al-Jazarī, *Nashr* (especially vol. 1, pp. 99–192, listing the *asānīd* for all ten readers).

143 See, e.g., Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Bannāʾ al-Dimyāṭī (d. 1111/1705), *Ithāf fuḍalāʾ al-bashar fī'l-qirā'āt al-arbaʿ ʿashar*, ed. Shaʿbān Muḥammad Ismāʿīl (Beirut: ʿĀlam al-Kutub and Cairo: Maktabat al-Kulliyāt al-Azhariyya, 1987), pp. 75–80.

144 See, e.g., Ibn Jinnī, *Muḥtasib*, p. 102 (that whatever falls outside of Ibn Mujāhid's seven – which are considered to be authentic by consensus – is *shādhdh*). The term has been used in multiple ways, and can refer to readings that are anomalous in Arabic usage or on the margins of proper grammatical usage (*shādhdh fī'l-qiyaṣ wa'l-istiʿmāl*), such as Ḥasan al-Baṣrī's reading in the first sura of '*al-ḥamdī li-llāh*' or the Bedouins' recitation of '*al-ḥamdu lu-llāh*' (Ibn Jinnī, *Muḥtasib*, p. 111).

145 For an account of the history of the term *shādhdh*, and the list of categories it encompasses with respect to Qurʾan readings, see ʿAṭwān, *al-Qirā'āt*, pp. 6–7.

146 Ibn al-Jazarī, *Nashr*, vol. 1, p. 45. See also al-Suyūṭī's discussion in *al-Itqān*, vol. 2, pp. 203–4.

147 Al-Bannāʾ, *Ithāf*, p. 72.

148 See, e.g., Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 1, p. 325; ʿAṭwān, *al-Qirā'āt*, pp. 61–186, p. 93.

149 Ibn al-Jazarī mentions Abū Ḥaywa (as Shurayḥ ibn Yazīd al-Ḥaḍramī, a Syrian reader) as the last in his list of major readers by city (Ibn al-Jazarī, *Nashr*, pp. 14–15).

150 For instance, the grammarian al-Akhfash mentions Abū Ḥaywa (see, e.g., al-Akhfash, *Maʿānī*, p. 67), as does Ibn Jinnī in his defense of non-canonical readings (see, e.g., Ibn Jinnī, *Muḥtasib*, vol. 2, p. 293).

151 On Abū Ḥaywa's teacher (for which the proper vocalisation may be Abū'l-Barahsim, followed by Dutton (personal communication), and is the spelling of a surname that I have come across once), see the observations made by ʿUmar and Makram, editors of *Muʿjam*, vol. 1, p. 118 (that he was *ashhar asmāʾ qurrāʾ al-shawādhdh min ahl al-mudun*). See also Makkī, *al-Ibāna*, p. 91.

152 For instance, in the discussion of Q. 8:67 (*li'l-nabī* instead of *li-nabī*), al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, vol. 4, p. 29, attributes the reading to Abū Ḥaywa as well as Abū'l-Dardāʾ and Abū Ḥayyān, *Tafsīr*, vol. 8, p. 159, does the same.

153 See, e.g., the *tafāsīr* of al-Qurṭubī and al-Shawkānī. As previously mentioned, these *tafāsīr*, however, draw from the earlier works and contribute nothing new.

154 Rezvan has remarked on this as well, saying that 'manuscripts can serve as a fine example of the standardization of the text that the community had achieved by the end of the eighth century' (Rezvan, 'On the Dating of an 'Uthmānic Qur'ān from St. Petersburg', *Manuscripta Orientalia* 6:3 (2000), pp. 19–22).

155 Several early Qur'an manuscripts have been identified. See, for instance, lists in Nabia Abbot, *The Rise of the North Arabic Script and its Qur'ānic Development, with a Full Description of the Qur'ān Manuscripts in the Oriental Institute* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1939); A.J. Arberry, *The Koran Illuminated: A Handlist of the Korans in the Chester Beatty Library* (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis and Co., 1967); Werner Daum, *Yemen: 3000 Years of Art and Civilization in Arabia Felix* (Innsbruck: Pinguin, 1988), pp. 178–81, pp. 185–7; Déroche, *The Abbasid Tradition*; and photographs in Bernhard Moritz (ed.), *Arabic Palaeography: A Collection of Arabic Texts from the First Century of the Hidjra till the Year 1000* (Cairo: n.p., 1905). For preliminary observations on the early Qur'an fragments unearthed in Yemen in 1972, see Gerd-R. Puin, 'Observations on Early Qur'an Manuscripts in Ṣan'ā' in *The Qur'an as Text*, pp. 107–11; see also Hans-Caspar Graf von Bothmer et al., 'Neue Wege der Koranforschung', *Universität des Saarlandes Magazin Forschung* 1 (1999), pp. 33–46. Aside from the works by Dutton, Grohman and Rezvan mentioned herein, very few detailed studies of early Qur'ans have been published.